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DIALOGUES

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

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DIALOGUES

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

By the late WILLIAM GILPIN, A. M.

PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY,

AND VICAR OF BOLDRE, IN NEW FOREST.

PUBLISHED BY HIS TRUSTEES,

FOR THE

BENEFIT OF HIS SCHOOL AT BOLDRE.

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DIALOGUES.

On Dialogue Writing.

As dialogue is a copy of that easy intercourse, and free communication, which men have with each other, it is a species of composition very generally pleasing. Accordingly, we find it in early estimation. Some parts of the Old Testament are written in this form; and the Greek, and Roman philosophy was often conveyed to the world through its intervention. Plato, and Tully were the great masters in philosophy of this mode of writing; in a lower style, Lucian made it the vehicle of buffoonery; and Theocritus and Virgil, adopting it in numbers, introduced it

into pastoral life.—I mean not however to examine the character of *ancient dialogue*, which bishop Hurd hath discussed with great accuracy. I mean only to point out a few of those rules, which appear to me, best adapted to dialogue in general.

In the first place, a *proper subject* should be selected. Every subject is not proper for a dialogue. A subject either *simply narrative*, or *simply didactic*, is improper, because it throws all the conversation into one hand. It should be a subject which has two sides; and will therefore bear a debate. If the narrative admit, in any of its parts, of doubt, or investigation,—or if the inquiry, whether philosophical, or religious, admit either of cavil, or of honest objection, it becomes a proper subject for dialogue; and such subjects are, perhaps, more agreeably discussed in the dialogue form, than in any other.

For the sake of truth however it must be allowed, that in abstruse subjects the looseness of dialogue *may be employed* to give plausibility to the weaker side; and so make the business of distinguishing error more difficult, than when

the subject is discussed in a direct argumentative manner. A debate indeed may be managed, in a dialogue, with all the acuteness of a logician; yet, in general, such precision is contrary to the freedom of colloquial intercourse. People rarely converse in that close manner, in which a philosopher writes. It would destroy the ease of conversation. If the interlocutors handle only the *prominent parts* of an argument, it is enough. In philosophic subjects, the Socratic dialogues are supposed to be master-pieces. I doubt whether they may not sometimes be found captious, uninteresting, and not convincing.

The *number of interlocutors* may be next considered. Two are, perhaps, sufficient to discuss any subject—unless a third may be wanted as a moderator, or umpire. More than three, I think, must either occasion confusion, or be mutes. Horace gives us a *rule* and *reason* at the same time:

———*hec quarta loqui persona* LABORET.

Let not a fourth person, says he, *labour* to

speak:—the meaning of which is, that, as he has no real business in the dialogue, if he speak at all, he must *strive*, or LABOUR, to get in a word as he can; which he must always do awkwardly. The bishop of Worcester, in my opinion, errs in this particular. In his dialogue, on the Age of Elizabeth, he introduces Mr. Digby, as one of the speakers; but Mr. Digby scarcely opens his lips during the whole conference; and it does not well appear for what end he is introduced. In his excellent dialogue, also, on *Foreign Travel*, a number of auditors are announced, not one of whom utters a syllable, and can, therefore, be of no use in the dialogue: while they certainly take from the ease of it, by representing lord Shaftesbury, and Mr. Locke, somewhat under the idea of prize-fighters, exercising themselves before an assembly. In Cicero's very beautiful dialogue on Old Age, the discourse is indeed chiefly thrown into one hand. But here it is done with great propriety. Cato, now far advanced in years, is introduced instructing two young men; and the dramatic colouring of a dialogue certainly gives his instruction more life, and animation, than if it had been delivered in a more didactic form.

We consider next, *what kind of speakers* are proper. Bishop Hurd repudiates the *fictitious* character. It cannot interest, he says, like one drawn from real life. That is true: yet, sometimes perhaps you may not have a real character ready for the subject you want. In this case, I should certainly, with the Bishop, reject Philander, Sophronius, and other antique names, which are not only contrary to the best Greek and Roman models, but give an air of fiction to the very face of the dialogue. At the same time, I should not scruple to introduce a modern name, though fictitious; endeavouring only to make it interesting by some little history annexed to it. The Bishop, perhaps, is too nice also in allowing only such characters to communicate in dialogue, as are upon an equality. His reason is, to avoid ceremony. But ceremony may be often laid aside; and very interesting conversations carried on between people of different stations. The bishop refuses, for instance, to introduce a lord and his chaplain together. But he must be a very haughty lord, or a very supple chaplain, if they cannot often enter into very free conversation.

And here let me add, that I cannot say I am much pleased with laying the scene of a dialogue in the other world. The great beauty of dialogue-writing consists in the ease, and probability, with which the dialogue is carried on. But this, in a great measure, is lost, when the scene and characters are both unnatural. Besides, neither the precept, nor the example, can be very interesting, when conveyed under such ideal forms. Lucian led the way in this mode of dialogue; and, as he meant to ridicule the theology of his country, it was the best vehicle he could adopt for exercising his wit and satir. But I know not what other end it can answer.

The advocates for this species of composition, may perhaps say, that as it does not profess to *copy nature*, but is a sort of fiction *out of nature*, it should not be examined by those rules, which apply to the just representation of *life and manners*. Certainly, it should not; but the question is, whether any subject, which is thus treated, might not be better treated in some other mode? If again it be said, that this kind of dialogue brings men together of different ages and coun-

tries, and so makes the contrast stronger—it occurs in answer, that characters equally contrasted, might probably be found in *real* life; or certainly so *feigned*, as to give every necessary instruction. Besides, in a Christian writer, it is rather disgusting, perhaps somewhat irreligious, to bring good and bad people discoursing together, unreservedly, in a future state; and discussing such points as we cannot suppose will be the subjects of conversation hereafter. In short, this mode of dialogue appears to me, on the whole, neither elegant, useful, nor natural.

Having chosen our characters, the next point is *to bring them easily together*. In this a little dramatic nicety is required. If the characters are *real*, an allusion to some *known facts* may be pertinent. If they are *feigned*, care should be taken to add a few of such circumstances as are *agreeable to the fiction*. The dramatic introductions of Plato's dialogues are commonly very easy and natural. In his Phædo particularly, the reader is introduced in the most pleasing manner to Socrates in prison, on the day of his death. That beautiful circumstance of his laying up his leg, after his

fetters had been taken off, and rubbing the part they had fretted, from whence he took occasion to speak of the succession of pleasure to pain, is one of those happy circumstances which brings the scene immediately before the reader's eye.

We next require, that these characters, whatever they are, should be *naturally supported.* This, however, appears to be a point of no great difficulty, because much on this head will not be expected. In *dramatic writing*, the *peculiarity of manners* must be illustrated by a *variety of incidents*; and it requires great skill to support a *character* through all the intricacies of a well-contrived drama. But the object of dialogue is rather the *investigation of truth*, than the *display of character*; and the speaker is introduced chiefly as the vehicle of the author's opinion. If indeed you introduce a character strongly marked, either in history, or in fable,

——— iratum si forti reponis Achillem,

some respect certainly must be paid to the distinctive features of such a character.

Here a question arises with regard to *language*. You take your interlocutors perhaps a century before the time, in which you write; are they to speak in your dialect, or in their own? This question, I think, may be answered by another. For whose benefit and amusement do they speak? If for those of the present age, make them intelligible to those of the present age; and do not puzzle a modern reader with antique words and phrases. To introduce a Roman *in a picture*, dressed in a coat, waistcoat, and bag-wig, would be absurd. There is no reason *for* it, and much *against* it. It would make the action unintelligible; and, when explained, would give offence. But, when a Roman is introduced on the stage, and, dropping his Latin, expresses himself in some modern language, he acts agreeably to the strictest dramatic rules. There seems to be no more impropriety therefore in making a man of the fifteenth century talk like one of the eighteenth, than in making Julius Cæsar, in a play, speak good English.

Here however it may be observed, that, if you introduce popular *authors*, who wrote several

ages ago, and whose antique modes of expression are current in every body's ears, you cannot well put modern English into their mouths. From Chaucer, for instance, such English would sound harshly. Such characters, therefore, should be avoided. Spenser I should not scruple to introduce as a modern speaker; for, though his poetry is antique, his prose is less strongly marked. Lord Clarendon's *writing* is parenthetical, and verbose; but we may allow him to *speak* with more conciseness. For liberties of this kind, at least, we have Cicero's authority, who puts in Cato's mouth the modern language of his own times.

I should wish my interlocutors, however, when *real* characters, to be strict observers of *chronology*; and make no allusions to persons, or things, posterior to their own times.

With regard to their *sentiments*, perhaps some little liberty may be taken. We cannot be acquainted with the *precise sentiments* of persons of a distant age, on almost any subject. All that can reasonably be expected, is to preserve a verisimilitude of sentiment. If you

cannot at all times give the *exact opinion* of a speaker, be careful at least to introduce nothing that is contrary to our general conception of it. Though, perhaps, you may vary a little from the precise sentiments of Hobbes, or Hampden, yet the former must always talk like a deist, and the latter like a republican. This also is a liberty granted to the dramatic poet.

Here, too, comes in a question—How far the customs, manners, and learning of ages previous to those in which the dialogue is written, should be observed? For myself, I am not inclined to be very strict on this head. No gross deviation should be allowed. A clergyman in Henry VIII's time should not talk of the 39 Articles; nor a philosopher of those days, of the properties of the prism. At the same time, to be nicely observant in a variety of little circumstances, many of which may be forgotten, and none obviously striking, would, in my opinion, be pedantic and affected. Were a man writing a treatise on the manners and usages of the ancients, he could not be too exact; but in a dialogue, in which other subjects make the prin-

cipal parts, these are only appendages, or secondary points.

It is next required, that a dialogue should be *natural, easy, and carried on with the unrestrained freedom of conversation.* Even extraneous matter, if it be pertinent, and well-connected, may now and then, for the sake of variety, be introduced. It has a good effect, also, to make little *allusions* to *supposed* facts, as if they were *well-known*; and adds an air of probability to the conversation. Replies, too, should be pertinent, and aptly follow the speeches, which gave occasion to them. Indeed, it is among the niceties of dialogue-writing to order the speeches in such a way, as to bring the conversation *naturally* to the point you aim at.

One of the greatest incumbrances in dialogue, is the mode of introducing the speakers. Some introduce them with their names at the head of each speech. But, though this is proper enough in a drama, which is to be *acted*, it is, perhaps, rather formal in a dialogue, which is to be *read*. It seems more easy to introduce each speaker by such expressions, as—*said he—he returned—he*

answered, or *he replied*—varying them, as occasion may require. Or, if these introductions occur too often, the writer may contrive to introduce a speech now and then, in the third person.

The last requisite I shall mention in dialogue is, that it should not be *too long*. To carry on a conversation through a volume, of which we have some instances, is tedious and unnatural. Plato's dialogues are certainly very prolix. A Grecian ear, allured by the harmony of Plato's language, might perhaps be patient of such prolixity. We must, however, esteem it a fault in a modern dialogue. Few scholars, I believe, of these days, can say, they have gone through the whole of Plato's dialogues. We have many instances of these tedious pieces in English. One of the most remarkable is, *Berkley's Minute Philosopher*. However estimable it may be as a philosophical disquisition, it is a heavy business, considered as a dialogue. The length of a dialogue should in general be determined by that of common conversation. Or, if the subject cannot easily be concluded in one dialogue, let it artfully be divided into two, or three. I say, *artfully*, because a natural reason should be given for its being broken off, and resumed.

A

DIALOGUE

ON

EDUCATION,

BETWEEN

ARCHBISHOP TENISON

AND

LORD SOMERS.

A Dialogue on Education.

In the August of the year 1709, the court then residing at Windsor, where many of the nobility, and gentry had assembled to congratulate the queen on the success of her arms,* it happened that archbishop Tenison, and lord Somers met, one evening, on the terrace of the castle. Having exhausted the subject of public news, they began to entertain themselves with the beauties of the view before them—the extent of the country—the profusion and variety of its woody scenes—the windings of the Thames — and Eton college crowning the whole; and marked as a principal object by the radiance of a setting sun, which shot full upon it, gilding every pinnacle and buttress; while the grey dusk of evening was stealing, gra-

* On the taking of Tournay, which, after an obstinate siege, surrendered on the 30th of July.

dually, over the more removed parts of the landscape.

I never behold this delightful scene, (said lord Somers) but it invigorates me, and almost realises the fables, I have formerly read, of age metamorphosed into youth. There is scarce a spot in all the district before us, which does not remind me of some youthful exploit; and carry me back, at least forty years, in my life.*

And does your lordship, (said the archbishop) reflect, now in a cooler hour, with pleasure and approbation, on the education of youth; amidst such corruption as we find in all our great seminaries? Alas! I fear they are scenes of such disorder, that in general the heart suffers, as much as the head improves.

Various corruptions (replied lord Somers) will get footing among the youth of a polished

* I have learned that lord Somers was educated in a private school, at Walsall, in Staffordshire; but it is probable, he continued there only during his earliest years; and that he was afterwards sent to Eton. On this probability (for it is not certain), the dialogue proceeds.

age; who will undoubtedly catch the vices of their fathers. These modish improvements have, probably, increased since my day; and are certainly the ground of very reasonable apprehension. At the same time, my gratitude is due to a place, where I received the first rudiments of science; and where I made some of the best connections of my life.

I am glad your lordship (said the archbishop) has opened this conversation. My thoughts have been much engaged on the subject of it by a letter, which I have just received from sir Charles Bruton; and which, with a view to engage you farther on the topic, I shall take the liberty of requesting your lordship to read.

To his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Clowbury Park, Aug. 3, 1709.

My Lord,

I ought, before this time, to have thanked your Grace for your packet, by Mr.

Bewley. I was eager to see it, having heard it much spoken of by Ned Berkley, and others: nor have I been disappointed in the perusal. It is a spirited piece; well written; but somewhat too acrimonious. We all know the pen.*

Having thanked your Grace for one favour, I must now be a petitioner for another. I should be very glad of your advice in the disposal of my son. His age requires him to be taken out of the hands of women: but what to do with him, I am wholly at a loss; and the more I think on the subject, the more I am embarrassed. The indulgences of a private education, and the dissipation of manners, which often attends a public one, are equally alarming to me. Evils, I am conscious, there are attending both situations. I shall be obliged to your Grace, if you will point out to me, which mode of education you think attended with the fewest.

I have had letters, this morning, from General Hamilton, which seem to indicate the approach

* The piece here alluded, to was probably, one of Swift's political pieces.

of some great news. The allies are drawing nearer the enemy; and it is supposed, can mean only to attack them in their strong intrenchments.* The French king is said to be very gay, and affects to tell every body, that M. Villars was never beaten.

I am, my Lord,

Your Grace's most obedient,

and obliged humble servant,

C. BRUTON.

And pray, (said lord Somers) returning the letter, how has your Grace answered sir Charles?

I have not yet answered him; (replied the archbishop) but I intend to give my opinion intirely in favour of a domestic education.

* These movements led to the battle of Malplaquet, which was fought on the 11th of Sept. 1709.

Morals should be the first care, in the instruction of youth; and that mode, which promises most security here, is, in my opinion, the most eligible.

But is your Grace clear (replied lord Somers), that a private education does promise the most security?

Surely, (answered the primate) the stronger we form the habit of virtue, the better prepared the youth will be to encounter the corruptions of the world. He hath yet seen nothing bad. He is accustomed to hear of vice with horror. The very idea of it shocks him. By keeping him continually under your eye, and removed from the influence of bad examples, the virtuous impression becomes so strong, that it will not be easy, one should hope, to efface it. You have fixed the seal, and given the wax time to cool. All this, no doubt, depends, in a great degree, on the choice of a proper instructor: but I take it for granted, it is easier to find a good tutor, than a virtuous school.

I am but indifferently qualified, my Lord, to talk

with you on this subject (said lord Somers); for having never had children of my own,* I never turned my thoughts particularly to it. But, as far as the subject has occasionally presented itself to me, I rather doubt the truth of your conclusion. Were you forming a young soldier, would you be satisfied with shewing him how to draw up an army on paper—how to fortify a camp, or besiege a town, on a table? And would you expect, from these instructions, that he should commence a master in tactics, and be qualified to command an army? Or would you not think, that one very material chapter in his educationhad been omitted—that of *experience?* and that you had done better for the young soldier, if you had sent him early to serve a regular course of campaigns, under my lord Marlborough; and had thus put him in the way of adding practice to his theory?

Undoubtedly, (said the primate) because the art of war consists in the knowledge of a thousand external things and circumstances, which I cannot describe in the closet. But the

* Lord Somers was never married.

habits of virtue are internal; and are best impressed in quietness and solitude.

Some very sensible writers, (replied lord Somers) with whom your Grace is well acquainted, and among whom the military allusion is a very favourite one, saw more analogy, I should imagine, between the life of a christian, and the life of a soldier, than you seem ready to allow. We are instructed, as I remember, *to fight the good fight*—to *put on the whole armour of God*—and to *grapple with principalities and powers.* To me, I own, the life of a soldier, and that of a christian run parallel in many particulars; and should be formed on the same plan. The soldier should be formed in the field, among the dangers of his profession; and the christian in the world, amidst the temptations of his situation. If your pupil were intended to lead his life in a cloister, a closet education might suffice. All the purposes of life might be answered. But as I suppose you intend him for society; and he must, at some time, come forward into active life, it seems right to take him early out of the closet, and give him a

knowledge of that ground which, at one time or other, he will be obliged to take.

By your lordship's repeating the word *closet*, (replied the archbishop) you seem to imagine, that I wish my pupil to be literally immured from all company. By no means; to all that is good I should be desirous to introduce him. I wish only to make the impression of virtue so strong, before he comes abroad in the world, that it may be in a manner fixed. I mean as well fixed, as we can expect any thing to be, in so unsteady a subject as the mind of a youth.

I perfectly understand you, (replied lord Somers) you would keep him from the vicious part of the world, till his habits of virtue were formed. And this too is the plan, which I should adopt, if my pupil was afterwards to be conversant only among good men. But indeed, my lord, the *knowledge of vice* (I do not mean the *practice* of it) seems to me as necessary a part of education as the *knowledge of virtue*. Unless the navigator point out the shoals and rocks upon the coast, as well as the commodious harbours, his chart will be very imperfect.

I mean, (said the archbishop) to point them out. Here, I would say, your vessel will be stranded: there it will be dashed in pieces.

But still, (returned Lord Somers) you would rather trust a venture with one who had prudently explored these dangers himself; and, by experience, learned to avoid them; than with one who had examined them only by the chart—that is, whose knowledge was acquired only at second hand. Furnish the youth with every mode of knowledge which instruction can give—raise in his breast the most exalted ideas of virtue, and the noblest scorn of every thing mean or unmanly, depend upon it, when he comes into the world, he will find himself deficient in one piece of knowledge at least—the knowledge of real life. I speak not of *prudential* matters: in these he will unquestionably be the merest novice—a dupe to every one who has any scheme to execute upon him. I confine the argument, as I suppose your grace intended, merely to *morals*. In few words, though he know vice is detestable—and though he might not be in danger of seduction, if he could *always see it in its proper colours*; yet, having never been

initiated into the sacred mysteries of life and manners, nor having had any opportunity of tracing the disguises of the human heart, he will not be able, in many cases, to distinguish truth from falsehood.

May I take the liberty, (said the primate) of answering your lordship by telling you a story? A young gentleman of large fortune, with whose family I am well acquainted, was left in the hands of a guardian, who was a man of the world, and acquainted with all its arts. Under the apprehension, that his pupil might hereafter be made the dupe of designing men, he initiated him in all the mysteries of the gaming table. Among other lessons, he used to play with him at games of hazard, and made all the tricks of gamesters familiar to him. All this was well intended; and meant to guard his pupil against the arts of sharpers. But, whether the tutor carried his lessons too far—or whether the pupil was an apter scholar than was intended, it so fell out, that the young man, having been so well instructed to guard against the arts of sharpers, thought it best to turn this knowledge to his own advantage, by practising it himself; and is,

at this time, I have been told, the most complete sharper in the kingdom.

I suspect whom you mean, (replied lord Somers) and from a knowledge of the guardian have little doubt, but he carried his lessons too much into detail. But something of this kind of instruction, gained where it may most innocently be gained, in the experience of a school, may still be useful. What, think you, will be the surprize of the domestic youth, when he finds the young man of fashion, who is caressed by all around him, and the most agreeable man in all companies, to be, on a nearer inspection, immersed in every species of debauchery? Have his tutors been giving him a fair account of things? Is vice, so detestable in its nature, as it hath been represented? Depend upon it, this is the language of nature; and a much more eloquent kind of language, than the dead letter of a closet lecture. And, though such pleadings in favour of vice are too apt to find a passage into every youthful breast, yet I should think they would fasten the most easily on the most unexperienced--on those who have been the least accustomed to develope the glosses of

the human heart. Deprived of experience, what other criterion can the raw youth substitute in its room, to separate appearances from realities? Wholly unversed in the ways of men, he is continually mistaking one thing for another—forming improper connections—or giving way in unguarded hours—or gliding into undue compliances: and these false steps, which he may at first be led into through ignorance, may end at last in the extinction of virtue. It is inconceivable how soon the inexperienced mind may slide into frail indulgences. The habit of virtue cannot be formed in a closet. Habits are formed by acts of reason, in a persevering struggle through temptation. The domestic youth has never been put to proof. His passions are not subdued: they are asleep; and have never been wakened. Rouse them by temptation; and you will then see what hold your lessons have obtained. Whereas, he who is early initiated into life, and manners, is naturalized to the soil by degrees; and certainly better able to sustain the varieties of the climate.

I know not how I can fortify him better against the climate, (said the archbishop) than

by giving him a good constitution. A boy, who has been religiously educated; and hath had just principles infused into him from his cradle, I should hope, would be well prepared to meet the delusions of the world. Though he might for a while be misled, yet the strong ties of conscience and religion would be continually drawing him back; and would, in the end, most probably prevail. At least, I think he would have a better chance than the youth, who trusted more to the knowledge of the world; which knowledge he must necessarily have gained by being nursed among bad examples.—Besides, your Lordship must not imagine, that I should leave so *material a chapter as the knowledge of the world*, intirely out of my plan. I should certainly take every opportunity to instruct my pupil in the characters of men—to inform him of the various deceits he must expect to find—and to warn him, that he must not suppose every thing is virtue, which is caressed; but to look upon mankind with a jealous eye.

I may answer your grace, (said lord Somers) by assuring you, I should not wish to leave *so material a chapter, as religion*, out of *my* plan.

All I mean to say is, that if a certain degree of worldly knowledge is necessary, as I think it is, for the security of virtue, it can never be obtained in a domestic education. You might just as well, I think, endeavour to render the tour of Europe unnecessary, by describing in conversation the different scenes which it presents. The colours of men are so various, and so changeable, we might with equal ease fix the precise tinge of each drop in the shower that floats past the sun-beam, as characterise, by description, the various arts and subterfuges, and glosses of mankind. They can only be known by experience.

And does your lordship expect, (said the primate) that *any* youth can be master of this knowledge? To gain a knowledge of mankind is the work of a life-time; and my pupil would attain it by degrees, as well as your's. What is the experience of a *boy* at best? Turn any school-boy loose into the world; and he will find he has a new catechism to learn. He will see mankind under a different form; and must regulate his conduct by a new practice.

But who, (replied lord Somers,) stands the best chance to obtain a proficiency in this practice; he who was never in the way of obtaining the first rudiments of it; or he, who has been early introduced to the world in miniature—made his own observations—and, from his own experience, and little errors, has formed within himself that watchful temper, which is the best security of morals. Human nature is ever the same. The boy sees at school, what he afterwards finds practised in the world. The scale only is more enlarged; and the mode of refinement somewhat more delicate; and though it cannot be supposed, yet his knowledge of mankind can yet be mature; yet he hath gotten, at least, the grammar of the world by heart; and will be able to apply very many of his rules, when he comes to read its living authors at large.

Those vicious rudiments, (said the archbishop) which you call the grammar of the world, are my dread. I shudder to think of that early prostitution to vice, of which our great schools afford such melancholy scenes. There is hardly, I am told, a vice in high life, which you have not here in epitome. The

bottle, the gaming-table, the brothel—every scene of debauchery—every ingredient, if I may so speak, in Circe's cup, may here be found. A high taste in life too is acquired, and a turn for expense, which few families can support. And does your lordship think, that a knowledge of the world is equivalent to running risks, like these?

You and I, my good lord, (replied lord Somers) seek the same end by different means. You wish to make your pupil avoid vice by keeping him ignorant of it: I, by shewing him the mischiefs, and inconveniences of it. All you have alledged against the vices of schools are certainly truths; and melancholy truths they are for the rising generation. Parents, however, must thank themselves, in a great measure, for these mischiefs; for they furnish their children often so prodigally with money, that schemes of vice only can dissipate the sums entrusted to them. All their real wants are already supplied; and, though it is certainly right to give them money in proper proportions, to teach them early lessons of generosity, and economy; and shew them the inconveniences of prodiga-

lity, and improvidence; yet, when the money given exceeds that proportion, all beyond is spent in debauchery; and in exciting among boys, that emulation in expense, which, having ruined perhaps their father, will, in time also, ruin them.

But does not your lordship see, (said the primate) that all this corruption of manners in a school is full as dangerous, if not more so, than vice can ever be in the world at large? The world is a wide scene; and there is a chance that you may keep out of mischief. But, compressed within a school, you will be sure to find it. And, when bad examples are clothed in the mirth, and gaiety of youth—when they mix in the cheerfulness of holiday-pastime, the grateful vehicle, through which the poison is administered, carries it directly to the heart.

There is surely much truth, (replied lord Somers,) in what your grace observes: and when the corrupt manners of a school are notorious, that school I should certainly avoid. I am not, therefore, pleading in favour of the great seminary now before us; nor of any other par-

ticular school, firmly believing, that most of them are very ill-regulated: I am only, in general, endeavouring to prove, that, where the manners of a school are not indecently bad, an *education among boys,* is better than a *domestic one.* I am clearly of your opinion, that religion and morals are too little attended to in all our plans of education.

Aye, surely, (said the archbishop:) the stress is laid on languages, which cannot profit one in ten: while manners, which are of general use, are comparatively neglected. Few of our great schools set out with any idea, but that of inculcating languages by severity; which, though it may effect the designed end, often hardens the mind, and makes it callous to all the delicacies of moral feeling.

In the best schools, (said lord Somers) and in spite of every attention, there will be too little of, what you call, the delicacies of moral feeling. But, though I would do all in my power to eradicate vice, yet you must still give me leave to repeat, that, in a certain degree, the knowledge of vice itself may be useful. The

education of a school, constituted as the world is, would be imperfect without it. Here we see, and learn to avoid those evils, which will soon infallibly surround us. Nay, vice itself, when properly corrected, is an excellent preacher. The infliction of shame, and punishment on others, enforces the virtuous habit more strongly, perhaps, than a lesson of virtue on ourselves.

——— Teneros animos aliena opprobria sæpe,
Absterrent vitiis.

By *living examples* the master points out the instruction; and, in a manner, realizes morality. Precept and example are joined together. The former, without the latter, wants life and spirit.

In this light I have often admired that beautiful sketch of education, which Horace gives us in his own. His father, he tells us, sent him to one of the best schools in Rome, and, presiding himself over his education, instructed him in morals, by pointing out to him the good, or bad qualities of his companions,

and shewing him the consequences of their actions. The private education must needs want that variety of examples, which a more public one is able to furnish: at least it wants an intimate acquaintance with that variety of circumstances, on which every character is formed; and from which almost every action receives its denomination.

Besides, (continued lord Somers,) after a short pause, give me leave to add, there are many vices, to which the private education itself very directly leads—vices altogether unchristian, and unsocial. What do you think of pride, and self-sufficiency? Does not the mind naturally slide into them, where there are no competitors? where every thing seems studiously to centre in the service of one? where there must be much deference paid (take what care you can to avoid it) and flattery adminstered by servile inferiors, with whom your pupil must at many times have intercourse? Does not this culture tend evidently more to foster such bad principles, than an equal government, where all are on one footing —where no peculiar attention, or deference are paid to rank, or fortune—where the youth of

fashion must lower his over-weening thoughts, become one in a multitude; and make himself agreeable to those about him, by his gentle compliances, in order to live happily among them; and where they all see, that by excellence alone distinction is acquired? A school of boys, in itself, affords an admirable discipline. They teach each other better than the best philosophers, the unwritten law of civil life.

All that (said the archbishop,) I can readily allow. But still the school-boy, during his holiday-season, is in the same situation: so that the evil is not prevented.

If we can mitigate evils (replied lord Somers,) we do something. But what does your grace think of those narrow notions, which a private education is so apt to encourage? Unacquainted with society, the domestic youth is apt to contract a selfish mode of thinking; while the boy at school, daily conferring, and receiving favours; and seeing the inconveniences which attend selfishness, forms a more liberal, and enlarged cast of mind. To this may be added a train of prejudices on every subject, which the

home-bred pupil cannot avoid contracting. All his ideas are gained on one spot, and become his scale in judging both of men and things: and the earliest prejudices, we know, are the strongest.

Besides, his affections are apt to take entirely a domestic turn. Fathers, and brothers, and uncles, and aunts, absorb them all. He has little idea of any other social relation. Whereas the boy at school begins to form notions of a community. He finds himself engaged in a system; and his affections of course take a more liberal turn. Exceptions there are, no doubt; and we have many home-bred youths, who become public men; and many, who, having had a public education, live retired: but we are reasoning from averages; and speaking of the general tendency of particular modes of education.

It is true, (said the archbishop;) this is the only mode of discussion the subject allows. But on this head I would observe, that, if the attachment of the home-bred youth to his family and friends, may lead him into some mistakes on one side, it may be attended with great advantages on the other. If his parents are good people (as we

may suppose, from their having so strict a regard to the morals of their children) you must acknowledge that his living constantly with them, will form ties and connections, which we may suppose will keep him steady in a virtuous course. His early life is a kind of pledge for his future life. If, indeed, he has a bad example at home, he is better any where than with his parents. I have often seen dreadful examples of mischief from such education.

I acknowledge what you say, (said lord Somers) and it is certainly a great draw-back from my observations. You will however allow, that the temper is apt to contract peevishness, and sullenness—peculiarities at least, if not asperities from those indulgences, to which a home-education generally leads. The colours of life, it is true, often take their tinge from some future period. The prejudices of education may give way to other prejudices, or to the deductions of reason. But still we should be careful to give a right bias at first; for this almost always gives a leading direction.

Nor is the temper of a boy (continued lord

Somers,) more improved by a school-education, than his activity and spirit. What would become of old England's glory, if all her sons should be nursed in the effeminacies of a parlour? Where would be that hardiness—that undaunted spirit—that love of enterprize—that fearlessness of danger—and, in short, that manliness, which is fit for all the offices of society; and which is early acquired by bustling in a crowd?

Your grace must again allow, that high principles of honour are better inculcated in public. The friendships, quarrels, and various intercourse among boys, afford a thousand opportunities of shewing, and improving such principles, which cannot be had in private. The emulation of honourable deeds inspires them more strongly in a crowd of spectators; and the pulse of honour, of course, beats higher. I have known instances of heroism among boys, which might have suited a Grecian commonwealth.

Again, is it not a matter of great importance to inculcate ideas of society; and to imbue the mind with early notions of submission to autho-

rity, and government? At school a boy gets some idea of that dependence, which the several parts of a community have on each other. He sees the beauty of order—the utility of law—and the necessity of government. School hours, and school privileges, have a tendency also to impress on him a love for liberty. These are ideas, which the home-bred youth cannot form. You may give him lessons on all these subjects; but such lessons must ever be inferior to an intercourse with life—seeing with his own eyes, —and *delivering instruction*, as Horace has it, *to himself*.

I may add, too, that the mind has often a timidity, and diffidence in its own powers, which prevent its exertion, and which the private education will naturally increase. An early intercourse with boys often tends happily to cure this faulty bashfulness; and to give the youth that confidence in himself, which leads to proper action.

After a little pause, the archbishop said, he would give his lordship's arguments a serious review, before he advised his friend. Or ra-

ther, said he, I shall give him the substance of our conversation; and leave him to judge for himself. For myself, however, with regard to several of the points which your lordship mentions—the improvement of the temper—just ideas of liberty, and slavery—a sense of honour—and a proper confidence in ourselves, I doubt much the effect of a school education. At least, it has fallen often in my way to observe tyranny, cruelty, ill-temper, pertness, knavery, and impudence among boys, which I have thought have been encouraged by a public education. With regard also to *school ideas of society*, I cannot lay much stress upon them. They have, in my opinion, much the appearance of the compact of a clan, social among themselves, but hostile to all others. A gentleman lately told a story at my table, which gave me great offence, though it was received with some pleasantry. A person in the neighbourhood of a licentious school, had an orchard with a few young apple trees in it, which he wished to preserve, that he might distinguish their several kinds. But he was so infested by the boys, that for two years together, he could not save a single apple. They were all carried off before

they were ripe. At the beginning of the third summer, he called some of the senior boys to him; and desired them to inform their companions, that, if they would engage not to touch his apples, he promised, that at the end of the year, when they were ripe, he would fairly divide them all between the school, and himself. This seemed very advantageous, and the boys received the proposal with emotions of general approbation; when a chief arose, who had the interests of *society*, we may suppose, much at heart, and overturned, with one short speech, the resolutions of the whole assembly. You fools, said he, what are you about? Do not you see, that if you close with this offer, you lose one half? I could not help quashing the mirth of the company on the receipt of this story, by observing, that such knavish tricks boded ill for the rising generation—and that I hoped this sage adviser should never be employed hereafter in any public trust.—Then again (continued the archbishop,) that active, adroit spirit you recommend, is in general, I fear, little more than a readiness in tricking. As I illustrated my former observation with a story, I shall illustrate the observation I have just made, with another.

Some boys had been in mischief, and one of them had reason to fear a discovery. He wore a particular kind of gloves, and found he had left one of them behind, which he did not doubt would be brought up against him: He immediately, therefore, provided himself with another pair of the same kind; and soiled them into a proper appearance of long service. The next morning, as he had apprehended, the master pulled out the glove, and demanded to whom it belonged? The owner of it stepped out, and said it was his. The master beginning to fulminate, the boy, with perfect innocence of countenance, not seeming to understand what he meant, said, he believed the glove was his, but he was not sure. On searching his pockets, however, he found both his gloves; and convinced the master completely of his innocence. Such an adroit action would be longer remembered in the school, than any of the masters' lessons. Among boys, success is a criterion of truth. But a boy, who could thus commit a piece of knavery, and cover it by so contrived, and artful a falsehood would, I fear, become a man, with whom no one would wish to have any dealings.—However, added the archbishop, to be

candid, I will grant the two modes of education, in many of the particulars you have mentioned, to be nearly on an equality; for the real truth, I apprehend, is, that the natural dispositions of different boys require different modes of education. The forward youth may be turned into a pert one by a public education; while the diffident, and modest one, may have gained a becoming assurance. There is, however, one point, added the primate, which, I think, your lordships must give up to me; which is, that the private education, in point of mere learning at least, has the preference.

Though much might be said, (answered lord Somers,) on the head of emulation; and what may be called the floating atmosphere of learning, which, in a great school, must, in some degree, be inhaled by every member, and which cannot elsewhere be had; yet, notwithstanding all this, I might perhaps give up the point without much debate. The particular care, and application of a judicious master to one person, must certainly be of great advantage.

I think so indeed, (said the archbishop:) and

as to *emulation*, I fear it is a very dangerous principle. It leads often to spite—to malice—to a variety of vile passions, which you would not wish to encourage. A lower boy may imitate a higher: but, among class-fellows, imitation is rivalry.—But suppose we draw our opinions nearer together; and, instead of keeping our young man with his father at home, or sending him into a large school, we send him to some master, who takes only five or six boys. Here will be little of the emulation which I fear, on the part of the boy; and all that particular attention which you require, on the part of the master.

I cannot say, (replied lord Somers,) I cordially close with your grace's compromise. The emulation, no doubt, would decrease with the number of competitors; but very few of the advantages, I believe, would remain, which I endeavoured to point out in a school of boys.—Besides, I should fear more for the morals of my son in so confined a sphere, than in a larger community—unless indeed his few companions were all picked and chosen. In a large community of boys, he may may find some of them well-dis-

posed, with whom, if he be well-disposed himself, he will naturally form an intimacy. But among so few boys, he has the less chance: and if any of these boys, with whom he is obliged always to consort, be bad, he has little chance to escape their influence. But I think it rather too late to continue our conversation this evening; for these dews, however they may affect you, are somewhat unfriendly to my infirm state of health.—If you are at leisure to-morrow morning, and will breakfast with me at sir Nathaniel Digby's, whose guest I am, we will, if you please, renew the conversation: and sir Nathaniel, whom your grace knows to be one of the best men, and politest scholars in the kingdom, may perhaps be so good as to act the moderator between us.

To this the archbishop consented. As they walked home, there is one argument yet for a public education (said lord Somers) which I have omitted; though it is one on which prudent parents perhaps lay more stress, than on all the rest; and that is, the advantages which their sons may reap in future life, from the friendships contracted at school with the heirs of great families. But

on this argument I believe, neither you, nor I, will lay much stress.

I believe not, (answered the archbishop.) He who educates his son on this plan, has little regard to the true ends of education. Besides, I do not see the policy of it. It supposes me to give my son an expensive, and dangerous education, through the expectance of some future advantage, which depends on various circumstances; and which, it is an hundred to one, may never take effect. There is much greater probability, that it may ruin the young man (even if he should form the acquaintance he desires) by giving him an emulation to vie with those above him, and leading him into expenses, which he cannot support.

Copy of a letter from the archbishop of Canterbury to sir Charles Bruton, at Clowbury-park.

My very worthy friend,

I hope you will excuse my delay in answering your letter; as this delay hath enabled me to an-

swer it with better effect.—I had been ruminating much on the subject you proposed to me, fearful of misleading you in a point of such importance; when I had fortunately a conversation on the subject with my good lord president;* whom I accidentally met last week at Windsor. For myself, I inclined rather to a private education. My lord seemed rather inclined to a public one; on which he made many good observations; the heads of which you will find, together with my answers, in the inclosed paper. As the evening however grew late, before we had finished our conversation, we agreed to continue it the next morning, at sir Nathaniel Digby's, with whom lord Somers was then on a visit. For myself, I was very happy to have the opportunity of knowing the sentiments of two such able judges of life and manners, before I gave you my own.—We met at nine; and after breakfast retired into an alcove in the garden, where lord Somers, and I went over nearly the same ground, we had gone over before; only somewhat more in the argumentative form, as we had each had a night's preparation.

* Lord Somers was at this time president of the council.

I observed however that in this review of the argument, each of us tended rather to the other's opinion. Lord Somers seemed to lay more stress on the corruptions of a public education than he had done before; and I, on the deficiencies of a private one. Sir Nathaniel, having heard what we both had to say, with his usual discernment moderated between us. He told us handsomely, that there was too much argument on both sides of the question to give up either. My lord president, said he, has shewn so strongly the necessity of an early introduction to the world, that I think it cannot be overlooked in education. At the same time, turning to me, you have pointed out so many gross corruptions in the general management of schools, that I think we must be very wary how we trust our children in any of them.—Let me then propose a compromise. Chuse the most virtuous school you can—where the head is not neglected; but where the heart is more attended to: and where religion is made more an object than learning. Here let your boy continue, till he is twelve, or thirteen: In five or six years he will have shaken off the ideas of the nursery; and have gained some knowledge, both of the

world, and of himself. About that time, sooner or later, his passions begin to rise; and that is the critical period, when I consider the vices of schools both in the way of knavery, and sensuality, to be the most mischievous. Hitherto they have made little impression. This is the time then, (applying himself to me) when your scheme should take place. If you can find a good tutor, you will certainly, by placing your son under him, I think, reap the advantage in point of morals—and in my opinion in point of learning also. I know not, added he, what you classical gentlemen may think, but it appears to me a very great waste of time, to lay it out on acquiring the *proprieties*, and *elegancies* of a dead language; which is nearly all that our public schools profess. For myself, I own freely I lost much time in those pursuits, which I have since found of little or no advantage to me.

In my time I could have made Latin verses with any boy of my standing; and could, have composed, at least as I then thought, in pure Ciceronian style. At present, for want of using faculties, which I never had any use for, I should be

ashamed of shewing either such verses, or such Latin, as I could now write, to the lads of any of the upper forms of our great schools. If a youth can *read*, and *understand* a dead language, it seems to me all that is necessary. At the age of thirteen, or fourteen, his mind should therefore be opened by knowledge; and this will certainly be effected better by the particular application of a tutor, than in the best grammar-school.

Having thus, my dear Sir, given you the result of the conversation I had with my lord Somers, and of Sir Nathaniel Digby's compromise, I have the pleasure to assure you, that in his sentiments we both acquiesced. So that I send you here not only my own opinion; but the opinions also of two of the politest, and best scholars in the kingdom.

I was sorry to see my Lord President look so aged. I should not suppose he has yet attained his 60th year;* but you would think

*Lord Somers was then 57; and died about six years afterwards, greatly debilitated before his death.

him at least 70. He still however possesses all the vivacity in conversation he ever had. I pray God bless you in all things. From

Your assured Friend,

THOMAS CANTUAR:

Croydon, Aug. 21, 1709.

A

DIALOGUE

ON THE

DIVINITY AND ATONEMENT

OF

CHRIST.

A Dialogue on the Divinity and Atonement of Christ.

SIR CHARLES BENNET was a young gentleman of good fortune in Essex. He was a man of parts; and of more knowledge than the generality of young men of fashion possess. But his father, who had been a gay man, had little religion himself; and left his son to contract such prejudices against it, as usually follow a neglected education. The young gentleman had naturally, however, a good disposition; he was a decent man; he went constantly to church, by way of example to his tenants; his secret pleasures gave no offence; and his conversation was generally guarded. He had yet been in possession of his fortune only three years, the two former of which he had spent abroad: so that he had hitherto formed no character in his own neighbourhood; except that of a pleasing young man, who

wished to live on a good footing with all the gentlemen of the country. Among those, who were most acceptable to him, was Mr. Willis, an old college-acquaintance, whom he had the pleasure to find curate of his parish. Mr. Willis was an agreeable man, of general knowledge, and exemplary in his profession. He had also a great esteem for Sir Charles, in whom he had known many instances of a good heart, and a just way of thinking. He was the rather inclined also to cultivate his acquaintance, as he hoped occasionally to throw in something, that might tend to give his young friend more favourable sentiments of religion. He seldom, however, began a conversation on any religious subject; but as he was an ingenious man, he knew how to lead a hint, that might have been occasionally thrown out, to the point he intended.

I suppose, said Sir Charles, (as they were sitting carelessly together, one day, after dinner) you consider Dr. Lucas, (who, it seems, had preached for Mr. Willis the Sunday before) as a very orthodox man.

I fear, said Mr. Willis, I shall give you a bad

impression of Dr. Lucas, if I allow him to be so, unless I first know what you mean by an orthodox man.

Mean! (replied sir Charles)—why, I mean, a man, who will swallow Creeds and Articles, and what not, without scruple.

I dare say, (returned Mr. Willis) that if Dr. Lucas did not *believe* that *Creeds, and Articles, and what not,* depended on scripture-proof, he *would* scruple to swallow them. But I think you lay-gentlemen need not press us on these heads; for as *you* are not tied by Creeds, at least by Articles yourselves, you may leave them to the consciences of us clerical people, without troubling yourselves about them.

Not quite so; (said sir Charles) for you preach to us on these points, as if they were the appendages of scripture. I reverence the New Testament; I can take it up, and read in it many noble strains of morality: and though the whole is much enveloped, no doubt, in Eastern allegory, and Jewish phraseology; yet I can easily perceive, beneath this mantle of obscurity,

a form greatly beyond what the heathen moralist could display.

The New Testament is highly obliged to you, my dear Sir, (said Mr. Willis) for this eulogy upon it; but I fear you leave the most interesting part of it out of the question.

Yes, yes, my dear Willis, (said sir Charles) I know well enough what you mean. Here ends the Testament; and here begin the Creeds, and Articles. You must believe in three Gods; and that one of these Gods was crucified to satisfy another of them.

Give me leave (said Mr. Willis) to say, you hurt me with that light manner of expressing yourself. You cannot surely, my dear Sir, represent this as the real doctrine of a christian divine!

Sir Charles, who was a perfectly well-bred man, begged pardon, if he had expressed himself unbecomingly. But to tell you the truth, said he, I know not what else to make of doctrines, which I have often heard from those you

call sound divines. Before my elder brother died, I was intended for the church myself. My father had this living, which is a pretty good one, in his gift; and considered it as a second son's portion. So I was sent to Oxford, to fit myself for it, where I had good books put into my hands. My tutor at Wadham, I remember, recommended to me Pearce* on the Creed, and Burnet on the Articles. But it was heavy work; and before I had compleated my opinions, it pleased God to take my elder brother. My father then thought proper to put my education on a more liberal plan. But I had read enough of those good books to remember, I was to believe, that Jesus Christ was God, and that he died to atone for the sins of mankind.

Have you any real desire (said Mr. Willis), to enter into the discussion of these matters in a candid way? If you have, I will endeavour both to shew you what our doctrine is, (call it orthodox, if you please) and on what we found the truth of it. You and I have often touched on these points before; but you have never given me such an opening, as I could properly pursue.

* He meant Pearson.

I'll be free with you, (said sir Charles;) if you will leave out your Creeds and Articles; which, give me leave to say, I cannot help thinking sophistications of scripture, I have no objection. But, to speak honestly, these are mountains, which I have not faith to remove. It is the nature of all human things to grow corrupt. Nations grow corrupt—governments grow corrupt—and even religion itself. The religion of nature, I apprehend, was at first pure; but it soon became blended, and stained with heathen rites, and superstitions. The law of Moses, which was ingrafted upon it, I suppose, might be originally pure also; but the scriptures inform us, how much it became sophisticated, before the death of Christ; and since that time, the Jews have taken care to let us know, what heaps of nonsense, and absurdity have been raised upon it in Misnahs, Gemeras, and Talmuds. The Christian religion, I apprehend, was established on the corruptions of Judaism; and was at first, like it, pure and untainted: but in process of time, it too submitted to the general fate of all human things. Heresies arose in one part—holy wars broke out in another. The Mahometan religion corrupted the Eastern world, and

the Romish religion the western; while those parts, which call themselves reformed, are little better than either Turks or Papists, if you will believe what each says of the other. Even in our own church, what collections have we of strange opinions, and yet all gathered from scripture: nay, how far the scriptures themselves may not be corrupted, I should not take upon me to say. I have heard, that some critics have collected hundreds of various readings from different manuscripts; and this diversity, I should fear, in some degree invalidates the whole. In the mean time, my dear Sir, I totally absolve you, and many other worthy men like you, from having any hand in promoting these corruptions. I know how easy it is for prejudice, especially when tinctured with religion, to get footing in a pious mind. What numbers of persons, in the last age, men of thought and letters, as firmly believed transubstantiation, as you now do, that the same person could be God and man. Opinions of this kind are for ever changing. If therefore you will not carry me into these wide fields of uncertainty; but keep strictly to *reason* and *common sense* I shall not object to enter into a debate with you.

That is, said Mr. Willis, you will fight me, if I will throw away my sword. To deny a divine the use of scripture, is to take his law-books from an advocate. My regular attack on your principles should be this. I should first prove to you the authenticity, and truth of scripture; shewing you that neither these various readings, nor in fact any other corruptions (for I allow there were many) are any argument against real christianity; or against either testament, as we now receive them. I should *then* reason with you *from* scripture. I should add the old testament to the new, and endeavour to point out to you, from the prophecies of the Jewish scriptures, and the economy of the Jewish nation, that the christian religion was a scheme, which had been gradually advancing from the earliest age. I should then endeavour to explain to you the offensive doctrines of christianity; and from the authenticity of the book infer the truth of what it contains—However as I am deprived of my own weapons, I shall endeavour, as well as I can, to meet you with your's—*reason* and *common sense*: only you will still give me leave to remind you, that the grand arguments in favour of christianity

are still behind. Let me know then, what are the chief parts of christianity that you think so opposite to *reason*, and *common sense*.

Why no part of real christianity, (replied sir Charles;) but what I have always thought the corruptions of it—the Divinity, for instance, and the Atonement. It is surely a very absurd thing to conceive, that God should become a man.

Mr. Willis asked him, what he called absurd?

Whatever, (replied sir Charles) controverts the common conclusions of reason.

Why then, (said Mr. Willis) the idea of a union between the divine, and human nature, is, by no means, absurd. Whoever is acquainted with heathen mythology must acknowledge, that nothing was so common as gods, and goddesses, coming down upon earth, and assuming human forms.

But hold, (said sir Charles) I suppose you are

now carrying me upon ground where I can find as little footing as before—among fables, and transmutations. If I reject the divinity of Jesus, I certainly reject the divinities of Ovid. I consider these accounts in the same light, as I do the history of a Cyclops, or a Centaur—not only void of truth; but *believed* to be so by the dealers themselves in these fables.

By no means (said Mr. Willis); the Cyclops, and the Centaur, were certainly fables—or perhaps rather truths concealed under the veil of fables. But the belief of Gods investing themselves with human forms, was, I rather suppose, the *established creed* of the heathen world. Whoever disbelieved it, would have been esteemed an infidel. We have so many facts of this kind told seriously, that we cannot but suppose they were credited. Look into Livy: if my memory fail not, he gives you numerous accounts of the appearance of Gods in human forms. At what battle was it, that Castor and Pollux were seen leading the van of an army, on white horses? Even the grave Tacitus, I believe, introduces facts of this kind. In short, both the Greek and Roman historians

abound with them. I shall mention however only one fact more, and that from a history which, I hope, you will allow to be at least of as much credit, as any I have alluded to. You remember probably the account of Paul and Barnabas, at Lystra, in the acts of the Apostles? On observing the miracle, which Paul had wrought on a cripple, the priest of Jupiter, who was, I presume, among the best informed people of the place, concluded they were *Gods in a human form*; and would have done sacrifice to them; all the people of the place being unanimously of the same opinion. An idea of this kind would never have entered into their heads, if they had not believed in the reality of such appearances.—Nor are the poets and historians alone full of these ideas; the philosophers also speak the same language. Tully, in several parts of his works, if I am not mistaken, gives intimations of this kind; and, in his dissertation on the nature of the Gods, speaks, I believe, very seriously on this point; as I think I could easily shew you, if I had my books at hand.—By all this I mean only to convince you, that the union of the divine and human nature is by no means intirely contrary to the ideas of *rea-*

son, and common sense; and therefore not *absurd*. Even if these things were looked on merely as fables; yet as fables, in order to be universally received, as these certainly were, they must have something of probability in them; there must be a consonance in the fable to what at least was believed possible, or it would never have become popular. Fables, in which animals are represented reasoning, and speaking, are of a different texture: yet even here *probability* must be observed. (Here Mr. Willis paused; but sir Charles not giving an immediate answer, he went on.) A union of this kind, (said he) is indeed so far from being contrary to the ideas of human reason, that we every day see instances of it. They are too familiar to be noticed. You are an instance. I am an instance. Every man is an instance. We all believe we have souls united to our bodies; and though we can give no account how this union is contrived, and managed; yet, as we believe it, it certainly does not contradict our reason. And if we see the reality of a union between spirit, and body, in one instance, why may we not believe the probability of it in another?

But still (said sir Charles) there is something

more than this in the union of God, and man. A man's soul is a part of him. Soul, and body were created together: they unite like friends. But God, and man are distinct natures. How these can unite, is beyond all conception.

To conceive *how* they can unite! (replied Mr. Willis) aye, certainly, we can never conceive, *how they can unite*. These are things we cannot comprehend; and if an angel from heaven should endeavour to explain to us the *nature* of this union, I doubt, whether we have faculties, which could possibly understand it. I did not presume, my dear sir, to explain to you the *manner*, in which this union is effected: all I attempted to shew you was, that in all ages this species of union *did not contradict the reason*, and *common sense* of mankind.

But, granting you so far, (said sir Charles) you certainly carry the matter to a length very contradictory to human reason, when you hold, that this God laid down his life,—that he really died. Can any thing be more absurd than this?

Nothing, truly; (replied Mr. Willis) but who does hold it? You cannot surely suppose, that we orthodox people, as you call us, hold any thing more, than that the human body of Christ died.

And that is surely enough, (said sir Charles) for any rational man to believe. What in reason can you alledge for the necessity of such a death? As *you* have quoted heathen writers, give *me* leave to quote them also. That no divinity should be introduced,

Nisi dignus vindice nodus Inciderit————

is a rule as valid, I believe, in religion, as in the drama.

Do you mean (replied Mr. Willis) that I should give you a detailed, and satisfactory account of all the difficulties, that attend the redemption of man by a Saviour; and of the *nature* of the Christian atonement? That I certainly cannot do. Here I must have recourse, as I said before, to the imperfection of

our faculties, which are not equal to the investigation of such incomprehensible subjects.

To effect a safe retreat, (said sir Charles) smiling has always been esteemed among the greatest instances of soldierly skill. The occult sciences have brought off many a lame argument with credit. And (if I may descend lower,) in duck-shooting, when I have been sure of my bird, I have often lost the effect of my shot, by the creature's diving, and disappearing. On these *diving* principles we may argue safely on any point.

Mr. Willis said, he thought he assumed no principles, which must not necessarily be assumed, in debating every subject. In matters of taste (said he)—in matters of science—in physics—in morality—what a variety of different opinions have we? And does not this variety sufficiently indicate that there are depths in every subject which we cannot reach? You see plants vegetate. In winter they shed their leaves; in summer they resume them. But can you give me any satisfactory account of vegetation? Can you inform me, *how* the sap circulates

through the tree? *How* it protrudes the leaf? You see the different appearances of the moon. You are convinced of its motion; and of some few other circumstances relating to it, you are tolerably ascertained. But can you give me any account of the nature of it? Of what substance is it formed? Is it inhabited? If it be, what are its inhabitants? Can you account for the saltness of the sea; or assign the cause of gravitation?—In short, our knowledge, at best, is only superficial. But so far as it goes, it is valuable; and we must not contemptuously reject the little knowledge we may receive on any subject, because we cannot get to the bottom of it. Because we know so little of the heavenly bodies, should we, for that reason, reject what knowledge sir Isaac Newton hath taught us?—If, then, there are difficulties in every thing that comes under our inspection, why should we suppose, there are none in religion? Indeed, why should we not expect more there than on any other subject; inasmuch as it exceeds all other subjects in the sublimity of its nature, and its immediate connection with the Almighty?

For a very obvious reason, replied sir Charles. We have nothing to do with the government of the sun, and moon; but with religion we certainly have. You tell us, it is a revelation from heaven, given us to direct our lives. If so, we may at least expect, that it will be intelligible to us; and I should hope, accompanied with fewer of those arcana, which adhere to physics, and other subjects.

Be candid, (said Mr. Willis,) and confess, we could not have a revelation otherwise than we have. The language of the gospel to mankind is, in effect, this: "You have such proof as may satisfy any reasonable person, that this revelation comes from God. It contains an account of things, that appertain both to God, and man. The former are, in many respects, beyond your comprehension. The latter, which you receive as the directory of your lives, are perfectly plain, and easy."

This (replied sir Charles) is fair, and rational enough: but is it the fact? Many of our interpreters of scripture go far beyond this; and tell us, we must believe such and such things,

as we value our salvation, however incomprehensible they may be. Such, for instance, is the satisfaction of Christ—a doctrine, I own which, as far as my divinity goes, is not only unscriptural, but highly offensive to all our ideas of right and wrong. How the death of an innocent person can make atonement for the sins of a guilty one, comes not, I own, within any ideas of justice, which I have received either from reason, or scripture.

With regard to *fixing salvation* (said Mr. Willis) to the belief of this article, or any article, I should be extremely cautious. If a man read his Testament with a pious disposition, and conscientiously obey the precepts he finds in it, and still cannot believe this doctrine, God forbid, that I should say, he was not in the way of salvation. But to tell you the truth, I should think such a person a phenomenon. The doctrine of the atonement of Christ appears to me so interwoven with every part of the scriptures, that I see not how an unprejudiced person can possibly keep his eye from it. And here, my dear Sir, let me point out to you, what appears to me, a great inconsistency in many persons of

latitudinarian principles. I have often heard them express great respect for the person of Christ, as a moral teacher; and for the Testament, as a compendium of very elevated morality. I think you yourself, a few minutes ago, made some such concession.

I did so, (said sir Charles.)

And yet this Testament, (replied Mr. Willis) is full of absurdities; and this exalted character says many things, and does many things, which prove him to be a downright impostor, if they are not true. Either, therefore, my dear Sir, believe what Jesus has said, or give him entirely up. These wonderfully gracious concessions in his favour, have really the appearance of fixing on him only the greater ignominy, under the guise of friendship. I have too high an opinion, my dear Sir, of your sincerity, to believe this duplicity of you: but I wish only to point out to you what certainly follows from the concessions you make.

Sir Charles was silent.

Though on this subject, then, of the atonement of Christ, (continued Mr. Willis) and others of high import, we cannot have complete knowledge; yet still it appears reasonable to me, that relying on the truth of scripture, we may embrace these doctrines, which are in the grand outline clearly laid down, though not detailed, or explained in such a manner, as to make them fully comprehensible to us. You do not presume to profess yourself a judge of the whole scheme of the redemption of the world by Christ. You must allow, there may be parts of it, which you do not understand. Does it not therefore appear very absurd to judge decisively of a whole scheme, of which you have only so partial a knowledge? You laugh at a person, who forms such partial judgments on other subjects. A foreigner, residing a short time in England, reports it to be the most inslaved country of the world; for, says he, it is a maxim of the English constitution, that *the king can do no wrong*. Sir, says an Englishman, overhearing him, if you had the means of obtaining more knowledge of our constitution, you would have found the maxim you deride gives the king no power at all; but is, in fact, only a check upon bad ministers,

And is not this, my dear sir, a proper reproof to every one, who ventures boldly to give judgment on any scheme, or system, which he does not perfectly understand?— Waving however, for the present, all subterfuges, as you suppose them, from our own ignorance; and all appeals to scripture, which you will not allow; let me endeavour to shew you, that the atonement of Christ is not an *unreasonable* doctrine, because the reason of man hath admitted many things, which bear a strong resemblance to it. He then asked sir Charles, what he thought of heathen sacrifices?

I never considered them (replied sir Charles) with any attention: but, in general, I classed them among the follies, and absurdities of heathen superstition.

Perhaps, said Mr. Willis, that is not considering them so philosophically, as the subject demands. You must be sensible, that the heathen sacrifice was often considered in the light of an atonement. *Piaculum* is so common a word used in expressing it by classic writers, that it may almost be called a synonime. Sacrifice was

certainly a very strange rite; and how the offering of the life of an innocent animal, to appease the anger of an offended god, came into practice, not only among this, or that people, but among almost all the nations of the earth —may truly be matter of just speculation. At the beginning of the bible we have an account of this rite, which appears to have been derived from God himself. I suppose no better origin of it can be assigned. For my own part, I am of opinion, it was one of those preparatory means, which God used to introduce the gospel, and to make the idea of an atonement more familiar. You must either, I think, accede to this supposition of its origin—or, if you suppose it merely of *human origin*, you must allow, that the idea of an atonement is not so wholly opposite to *human reason*, as your argument supposes: but that mankind had, from nature, some idea of the necessity of a sacrifice for sin.

Sir Charles candidly allowed, there was force in the argument.

And there is much more force in it, (continued

Mr. Willis) when we consider the Jewish ritual. I am not entering (said he) into any proof of the divine legation of Moses, or of the authenticity of the Jewish scriptures: all I would wish to call your attention to, is this. Here is a nation established under the discipline of very uncommon rites and ceremonies; almost all of which point at the idea of an atonement. The expositors of this law led the people to consider all these rites as emblematic types; and taught them to expect, that all these sacrifical ideas should be realized in some future time (which too was prophetically marked out with great precision) by a person, who should arise under the name of the Messiah, or the Redeemer. Accordingly, at the appointed time, this Redeemer appears, and completely fulfills all those shadowy representations in the several circumstances of his death. My argument extends only to consider the wonderful agreement between the types, and the completion of them.

I think (said sir Charles) there is something like a fallacy here. The authors of the new religion being desirous to establish themselves on a good basis, wisely accommodated their sys-

tem to the rites and ceremonies of a religion which had long subsisted; prudently strengthening their own building, by raising it on an old stable foundation.

I beg your pardon; (replied Mr. Willis) it was not the *friends* of the new religion, that made this nice application of types; but the *enemies* of it: and what is more, they did it unwittingly. They were themselves the very persons, (by what strange infatuation are mankind sometimes led!) who put Jesus to death; and by that means fulfilled, without intending it, the sacrifical types of their own institution. This, you must allow, gives force to the argument.—And here I must beg leave to draw you into the same confession as before. Either this wonderful arrangement of Jewish rites was of divine appointment; and, as I said, a preparatory opening to the world of that grand propitiatory sacrifice, that was about to be offered by Christ; —or you must allow, at least, that the ideas of a propitiatory sacrifice were agreeable to the reason of the whole Jewish nation. Here, you see, we have advanced a step farther. If the

heathen sacrifice was of dubious destination, and we conjecture only to what end it referred, we are under no such uncertainty with regard to the Jewish sacrifice. In it the idea of an atonement was openly professed, and universally pervaded the whole sacrifical institution.—Sir Charles pausing, Mr. Willis went on. Nor is the consonance of human reason with the idea of atonement deducible only from sacrifice; every part of life exhibits ideas of redemption from evils; and making atonement, or satisfaction, for the faults, or misery of others. What were your kind offices, the other day, to poor Robinson, in getting him released from jail, but a redemption from evils, which would have overwhelmed him, had it not been for your friendly interfering, and so far suffering on his account by paying a price? What is all surgical and medicinal aid—all relief of poverty—the whole course of our infancy, youth and education, but a friendly redemption from evils, to which, without that redemption, we must have yielded? I mention these things cursorily, merely to shew you, in the aggregate, that a redemption from evil, by paying a price, in some shape or other,—by money, by labour, by skill,

and often by suffering, is no new idea introduced by Christianity; but is in fact, *the usual mode of God's moral government*; and by no means contradictory to the natural ideas of human reason.—Let me just add one thing more (said Mr. Willis.) However the idea of Christ's atonement for sin hath been ridiculed by some people in the midst of youth and health—yet, when the world fails—when, from the recollection of their past lives, they feel they stand in need of some security from consequences they have brought upon themselves, and of which they become apprehensive, they are glad, I believe, in most instances, to lay hold of the idea of redemption; and feel the hopes of Christ's atonement very congenial to their sinking spirits, as they can have no other ground for the expectation of pardon.

Sir Charles was, in fact, more affected with this conversation, than he was willing to own. He said little at the time; but the arguments he had heard dwelt upon his mind; and threw him into a train of meditation, which was new to him. He examined his old objections—gave

them all the credit that was due to them. He compared them with what he had heard; and endeavoured to find out, whether there might not be some fallacy in what his friend had suggested. But his fertile mind, now in search of truth, continually raised new topics of conviction. In a word, he daily began to have more insight into that grand scheme of providence for the happiness of man, which he plainly saw had its origin in the earliest accounts of time; and was surely of such importance, as to deserve more examination than he had yet given it.

ON THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY,

FROM

PROPHECY AND MIRACLES.

ON THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY,

&c. &c.

Sir Charles Bennet went to London, soon after this conversation: and, though it had made a strong impression, upon him, yet, the gaieties of the town, and the influence of his old companions, who now again got about him, renewed many of his former prejudices; and he returned into the country, the succeeding summer, somewhat readier to make objections, than to examine evidence. Mr. Willis was concerned to observe this change; as he hoped what had already passed would have led so candid a man, as he esteemed sir Charles, to such an enquiry, as might have ended in a thorough conviction. In part, however, he blamed himself. He thought he had begun with his young friend at the wrong end. If, instead of endeavouring to clear away

difficulties, he had left them at present behind; and had first drawn him to take a view of the evidences of religion, he thought he should have done better. He resolved, therefore, to give this turn to the first conversation, which might afford him an opportunity. Sir Charles, however, was rather shy of entering into any religious debate. He was much upon his guard; and fearful, also, of giving offence.

As they were talking, however, one day, about the nature of evidence, on the occasion of some trial in a court of justice, which had not ended as sir Charles wished, he observed, that if he had been on the jury, the objections would have had great weight with him in overturning the evidence.

Mr. W. said, he thought it a matter of great caution to weigh objections against evidence. If the evidence was full and clear, the objections, he thought, were of little account. The objection was of a negative nature; and ought, certainly, to give way to the evidence which was positive. Objections, he said, might easily be made to any thing. With regard to the present case, he

thought the jury had the strongest positive evidence; and would have acted, in his opinion, very improperly, if they had turned aside from that, and listened to the objected circumstances. Indeed, he said, without this subordination of objection to proof, all science, as well as justice, would be at a stand. With regard, for instance, to the tides of the ocean, we have the most positive proof, that they are influenced by the moon; and if a thousand objections should be started against this hypothesis, I see not what weight they could have with a person, who, on rational grounds, believed firmly in the moon's influence.

Mr. W. had used the word *rational*, on purpose for his friend to catch at it. His bait took.

Aye, said sir Charles, on *rational ground*, I grant you; and in matters of science we generally have rational ground. But, said he, smiling, you, now and then, require our assent where the ground is not, perhaps, quite so rational. You carry us into a new world. Visible objects, such as the tides of the ocean, are removed; and certain aerial forms are brought floating before

us, which we are to endeavour to possess by *faith.*

Nay, said Mr. W. if we cannot bring down these aerial forms upon firm ground, and make them the objects of *rational evidence*, they would stagger my faith, as well as yours.—To be plain with you, my dear Sir, I suppose you now allude to the evidences of religion, which afford, in my opinion, as solid and rational ground of conviction, as the philosopher offers for gravitation, or any other article of his belief.

If you will only, replied sir Charles, consider what I say as the honest struggle of an endeavour after conviction, I will speak freely; and own to you, that I cannot conceive how the evidences of religion,—I mean the prophecies and miracles of the bibles,—can afford, in the nature of things, so convincing a proof, as we have of a physical fact, by occular demonstration.

Do you mean, my dear Sir, (said Mr. W.) that no mode of evidence is fully satisfactory, except occular demonstration? Or, in other words, do you doubt more of Cæsar's conquer-

ing Gaul, and landing in Britain, than you do of the moon's influence on the tides of the ocean? In my opinion, human testimony, in one case, is just as strong as occular demonstration in the other.

Human testimony (replied sir Charles) is certainly *capable* of producing as strong a proof, as any other mode of evidence. In many cases, however, it is unsatisfactory. When it brings to our knowledge *things agreeable to the common notions of mankind, and liable to no solid objection,* either from the things themselves, or the persons who testify of them, we may allow its credit. But, when it presents us with wonderful and uncommon facts, we are often obliged to withhold our assent. Thus, for instance, I can readily believe Cæsar's account of his conquering Gaul, and landing in Britain; but I do not pay such intire credit to the wonderful exploits, which Q. Curtius ascribes to Alexander, though we have human testimony for both.

But (said Mr. W.) if you will consider candidly the prophecies and miracles of the Bible,

you will find they really are such as are *agreeable to the common notions of mankind, and liable to no solid objection*, either from the things themselves, or the persons who testify of them. All nations, ancient and modern, barbarous and civilized, have had a propensity to that sort of proof, which arises from prophecy and miracles. Oracles were of this kind; and so were the various prophets we read of, under the different denominations of augurs, haruspices, sagæ, and vates. What were the Sibylline prophecies, and the sortes Virgilianæ? And if you want miracles, look only into Livy, and you may have them in any abundance. What a noble miracle did that augur perform, who, in proof of what he said, ordered a grindstone to be cut through with a razor? Then again, in modern times, we have ordeal-trials, and witches, and wizards, and weir'd sisters, and second sights, which all show the propensity of mankind to prophetic, and miraculous interposition. If mankind had not had this propensity, impostors could not have been found to indulge it.

But certainly, my dear Sir, (said sir Charles) you pay no great compliment to the prophecies,

and miracles of the bible, by introducing them into all this bad company,—the fooleries of barbarous and heathen superstition.

I have too much respect for them (replied Mr. Willis) to mean them any affront. But, as your argument led to suppose, that the prophecies and miracles of the Bible were not agreeable to the *common notions* of mankind, I only endeavoured to shew you, by these instances, that they were perfectly agreeable to such notions; and that they are, in fact, that very kind of proof, which the world, in all their religious inquiries, have most anxiously sought after. I would ask you, therefore, my dear Sir, if it does not appear to you, a great argument of the wisdom, and condescension of God, to chuse that mode of proving the truth of Christianity, which had already gotten footing in the world; and was so familiar to the general ideas of mankind? We will then separate them, as soon as you please, from the bad company, with which you are so offended to see them mixed.

So far (said sir Charles) I think is very true, that if God meant to introduce a new revelation,

he must shew his power to be superior to every other power.

No doubt; (said Mr. Willis) I hope, therefore, my dear Sir, you will allow we have thus far gained ground—that prophecy, and miracles, are not only agreeable to the common notions of mankind, but are the best mode of proof, which we can conceive, for confirming the truth of a new revelation. The only question, therefore, remaining is—How far the prophecies and miracles of the Bible, are such as we might expect from God?

If you will not call my inquiry a cavil (said Sir Charles) I should first wish to know, what credentials the prophet brought with him of his divine commission? for, though we allow the scriptures to be true, yet they seem to bear no farther testimony to the prophet, than that he lived at such a time, and prophecied of such events.

Surely (said Mr. Willis) he gains more from the truth of scripture, than you allow. He is spoken of, over and over, as deriving his authority from God. His character, therefore, in a great

degree, depends upon the truth of scripture. However, as you wish to draw him from the protection of this general authority, the credentials, on which he acts, are various. In the first place, as it was his principal office to predict a Saviour, the completion of his prediction was surely a sufficient credential.

To posterity certainly; (said Sir C.) but as the prophet lived, if I am not mistaken, many hundred years before Christ; and as the hopes of every succeeding generation were to rest on his predictions, one should have thought, that, in his own life-time, he should have given some foundation for those hopes.

The prophet sometimes, (replied Mr. W.) wrought miracles in support of his authority; but his more common mode was to found the credit of his distant predictions, by prophecies of an earlier completion, which related either to the Jews, or to some of the neighbouring nations; and which his contemporaries, or an early posterity, at least, should see fulfilled. The prophetic writings abound with predictions of this kind. If I had my bible before me, I could

shew you numberless passages. I shall just, by way of instance, mention one that first occurs. When Jerusalem was besieged by the king of Babylon, Jeremiah prophecied that it should be taken, and the people carried into captivity; but that, in seventy years, they should return; and, to prove the truth of his prediction, of which, perhaps, at the end of seventy years, there might remain no evidence, he bought a piece of land, and had the writings signed and witnessed by several persons, and then secured in an earthen pot,* which was to be opened at the end of the seventy years; when the land, being restored to his heirs, would give the strongest testimony to the truth of the Prophet's prediction. All this was completely fulfilled; and was surely sufficient to confirm the hopes in the Prophet's grand prediction, that the Messiah should be born of a virgin;† and that God would raise unto David a righteous branch.‡ In Isaiah, and all the other prophets, we have similar instances of the completion of these domestic prophecies, if I may so call them, among the neighbouring nations, which gave

* Jer. xxxii. 9. † Jer. xxxi. 22. ‡ Jer. xxiii. 5.

full evidence, no doubt, to the truth of their more extended predictions. I mean not to assert, that this evidence was the only end of these domestic prophecies: as warnings, and exhortations they answered other ends. To us, however, and to all who lived after our Saviour's time, these temporary prophecies are of little consequence. We have seen the evangelical prophecies completed; and *we* want no further proof.

I own (said Sir C.) I see something like truth in all this. The noble confidence of Jeremiah, who trusted the reversion of his property to the completion of his prophecy, pleases me much. But still, to make those prophecies worthy of their divine author, some other difficulties, I think, should be removed. Are not many of those prophecies very obscure; and capable of senses widely different from those, which you churchmen commonly assign?

They may be (returned Mr. Willis) when they are partially examined; but when you examine them all drawn up in array together; and conceive them pointing to one view, it is wonderful to see the force they receive from their connection

with each other.* In short, they should all be considered as making the parts of one uniform whole. Taken separately, many of them are undoubtedly obscure; but no person, I should think, could find obscurity in them, when they are thus considered in one point of view. The Jews certainly, before the coming of Christ, saw the predictions of their prophets in a true light; and through their means these notices were propagated among the several nations, with whom they had intercourse. It is a known fact, that many of these nations expected, about the time of Christ's birth, that a great prince should arise out of Judea.

But the Jews (said Sir C.) I understand, do not now interpret their prophets in this way. They do not allow, I think, that the Messiah is yet come.

All serious Jews (replied Mr. W.) at the time

* I have endeavoured to give them this connected view, at the beginning of an Exposition on the New Testament; in which I have drawn all the more material prophecies together, under the several heads of our Saviour's Life and Death.

of our Saviour's advent, did interpret the prophecies in the sense we do; and multitudes of them embraced the christian religion on the strength of these prophecies. Numbers, at the same time, misled by notions of temporal grandeur, and temporal dominion, rejected the spiritual ideas of the gospel; and of course affixed their own worldly sense to the predictions of their prophets. And this sense hath since become, through national prejudices, the confirmed sense of the Jews at this day, in despite of those very prophets, who foretold, that after the coming of Christ, the whole Jewish nation should be scattered, as they now are, over the face of the earth--separate from all other people; and yet without any government, or settled country of their own.

Indeed (replied Sir Charles) I have often thought, even at a time when I did not wish to think too favourably of revelation, that the present situation of the Jews is a most wonderful event; and especially as divines point out so many passages in the Old Testament, which lude to this dispersion. I remember meeting somewhere with a circumstance, in the Life of

the Prince of Condé, which made a great impression on me when I read it; and hath, since that time, often recurred to my memory. That great man having been pressed in conversation with some of the free-thinkers of his time, who endeavoured to shake his belief in christianity, "You give yourselves, gentlemen," said he, "much unnecessary trouble; the dis-"persion of the Jews will always be, to me, an "undeniable proof of the truth of chris-"tianity." But though I can easily (continued Sir Charles) see the reason, and use of the *domestic* and *temporary* prediction, which you mention as giving credit to the *evangelical* prophecy, yet I have often heard, that divines give an evangelical sense to prophecies which seem rather to carry a private, and confined one.

The objection (said Mr. Willis) deserves an answer. I shall not take upon me to defend the prudence of all our divines in this matter. I am of opinion, that many things have been said on this subject, which a little discretion might have prevented: yet thus much I think is certain—we cannot interpret many of the prophecies, without giving them a double sense: one, of

the temporal kind we mentioned—the other, remote and evangelical. But yet there was always some circumstance in this double sense, which seemed plainly to point beyond the temporary one. Thus, when Isaiah prophecied of a temporal deliverance to the king of Judah, before a child, which he was directed to hold in his arms, came to such an age, he was led on to speak of a still greater deliverance by another child; *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emanuel, or God with man.* This, no doubt, was obscure; but they who interpreted the prophetic writings by comparing one prophecy with another, clearly saw, that the divine Emanuel referred to something beyond what the prophet appeared to have immediately in view. After the birth of Christ at least, every candid mind would separate the two senses; and the evangelical one would remain as proof of the great event it predicted.

But still (said Sir Charles) would it not have been more convincing, if God had directed his prophets to utter their predictions in so plain a manner, that the meerest caviller could not have doubted their meaning?

If we have evidence *enough*, (replied Mr. Willis) we should not encourage in ourselves a thirst after more; and that we have enough in this case, is plain from the numerous converts it has made. Remember, what our blessed Saviour says of him who would not be convinced by Moses, and the prophets. That God has thought it proper to involve the prophecies in double senses, and in other respects to make them less plain and obvious, is argument enough for us to believe it right, without inquiring farther. Confined, however, as our understanding is, we may see reason sufficient in this matter, not only to acquiesce humbly, but to admire, the divine wisdom. In the first place, is it right, think you, that God should *force conviction* upon his rational creatures? Does it not seem more agreeable to the wisdom of God, and the nature of man, that, after God has given us evidence sufficient, he should leave the investigation of it, to our own industry and faith? Besides, had the prophets spoken with that plainness you wish, and in direct terms declared, that at such a time, for instance, Christ should be born at Bethlehem—that, at such a time, he should suffer death—and so forth—what would

have been the consequence? All who were concerned, to avoid the force of the prophecy, would have taken every means in their power to frustrate its effect; and the Deity must have interposed by a constant train of miracles. This would have given an entire change to the argument; and would have turned the proof from prophecy, which God intended, into a continued series of miraculous events, which God did not intend. But, as the case now stands, all candid people, even while the prophecies remained yet unfulfilled, saw ground sufficient to rest their hopes upon them, obscure as they were; and in succeeding times many of them were fulfilled by those very persons, who wished most to counteract them; and really did not know, that they were themselves accessory in completing them, till their own act, in the completion, stared them in the face.

Sir Charles thought there was great force in what his friend had said; and candidly owned, he believed people rejected these great truths, not so much for want of evidence, as for want of an inclination to search for it.

It tends still farther to convince us, (said Mr. Willis) when we consider how wonderfully providence often developes the intricacy of an obscure prophecy, through the instrumentality of unthought-of means; and brings it out at last, when nobody expected it, as clear as the day. Several instances occur; but I shall rest the argument on one. An ancient prophecy had foretold, that the Messiah should be born at Bethlehem. This prophecy, couched in terms far from direct, was however clearly understood by the Jewish rabbies,* as appears plainly from their answer to Herod; though the common people, it is probable, were unacquainted with its force. Mary, the mother of our Lord, and Joseph, her betrothed husband, appear not to have had any knowledge of this destination of the Messiah's birth. They had lived at Nazareth, a town situated about eighty or ninety miles north of Jerusalem; and seem to have had nothing less in their thoughts than a journey to Bethlehem, with any view of fulfilling a prophecy.—In the mean time, a decree was issued by Augustus Cæsar, enjoining all the inhabitants of Judea to be inrolled in their family

* Matth. ii.—5.

cities. This carried Joseph, and Mary to Bethlehem, the city of David. Here Mary was delivered;—and thus was most wonderfully fulfilled a prophecy, which, *till* it was fulfilled, had raised little attention.

Sir Charles owned it to be a very remarkable prediction; and very remarkably fulfilled. Few things (said he) ever struck me in a more forcible manner. But, in the mean time, I should be glad to know a little more of the authority of the books, in which these prophecies are contained. The credit of the prophecy depends on the credit of the book.

The credit of the prophecy, (said Mr. Willis) no doubt, depends, in a great degree, on the credit of the book; but it depends likewise, as we just observed, on its completion; which completion is of itself sufficient to secure the credit of the book. You may, in aid to this, however, my dear Sir, consider the antiquity of these books—with what care they have been all along preserved from the earliest time; and that their authenticity has been acknowledged in all ages; and never doubted in any. Consider,

farther, that they are the statute-books of the Jews—that they contain the very laws which govern the nation—and that it is impossible for laws to be surreptitiously obtruded on any people.

I think so, truly, (said sir Charles) but many of these prophecies, you know, are not contained in the pentateuch; but in detached writings, unconnected with it.

Not unconnected with it; (replied Mr. Willis) for there is a mutual dependence among them all: and the prophecies in the pentateuch are only confirmed, and strengthened by those of the prophets. The credit of both must stand, or fall together.—Besides, this connection is farther cemented; and indeed the whole argument from prophecy receives additional strength, when we consider those wonderful *types, and ceremonies*, which pervaded the whole Jewish polity; and were, in fact, as prophetic as the very predictions of the prophets themselves. The *history* also of the Jews was so far from being a system of *simple facts*, that it abounded with *prophetic circumstances*, as well as their

temple, and legal ceremonies. In short, the prophecy, the type, and the history, spoke the same language. If the prophecy mentioned the miraculous birth of Christ, the history held out the miraculous birth of Isaac; and if the prophecy touched on the saving effects of his death, the type held out the brazen serpent in the wilderness.

Mr. Willis having silenced, and indeed satisfied, sir Charles, on the subject of *prophecy*, asked him his opinion of *miracles*—the other great evidence of Christianity?

Sir Charles said, he thought miracles a mode of evidence chiefly calculated for the times, when they were wrought. For supposing them, added he, to be true, they received their chief force from the impression, which such wonderful works made on the reason of the spectator. The plain narrative is an insipid vehicle, compared to occular demonstration.

You argue justly; (replied Mr. Willis) and herein the infinite wisdom, and goodness of God are apparent. He has founded the Christian

religion on the two grand evidences of prophecy and miracles—both strong and conclusive to all ages. But miracles, as you justly observe, were more calculated to the age, in which they were wrought; while prophecy is a mode of evidence more adapted to posterior times, which have seen them, more and more unfolded. Miracles however must still be considered, at the present day, as having much weight in the cause of Christianity.

I am very far, my dear Sir, (said sir Charles) from treating them with the most remote idea of disrespect. I have little doubt, indeed, of their authenticity. Yet, if I were asked, on what grounds I believed them, I might perhaps be at a loss for an answer.

Why, in the first place, (said Mr. Willis) you will recollect, what we have already observed, that miracles have, in all ages, been that kind of proof, which men have chiefly sought after. So that we have, at least, the general reason of mankind along with us for the propriety of miracles, in proving the Christian religion. We have only to shew, that our miracles are better

authenticated than any other. The New Testament is our foundation for them. If we prove the authenticity of the New Testament, we prove, also, the truth of the miracles it contains. But we have already proved the truth of the new Testament, by proving the truth of the Old. As they depend on each other, both from the completion of prophecies, and the frequent notices, which the New takes of the Old, it follows, that if one be true, they must both be true. The authenticity of the New Testament, however, wants no *collateral* support. It can sufficiently support itself.—But, among the different modes of evidence, both external and internal, which confirm its truth, none has so much weight with me, as the deduction of it from the very times when it was written. Learned men have given us regular quotations from the several books of scripture, which they have drawn out of writings, as early as the apostolic times.* Nothing can tend to establish their authenticity more completely. Add to this, that the most

* See all these quotations methodized, and drawn up in order, by Dr. Lardner, in his Credibility of the Gospel; and well epitomized by Dr. Paley.

ancient enemies of the scripture, whose writings are still preserved, never pretended to deny its authenticity; which would indeed have been as absurd, as if we should deny the authenticity of the Koran. The credit of a book once established, cannot well be destroyed. And, as the early enemies of Christianity did not pretend to deny the authenticity of scripture, so neither did they pretend to deny the reality of those facts, which we call miracles. All they could do, was to attribute them to the interposition of magic arts, and evil spirits; and put them on a footing with the various impositions, that have appeared, at different times in the world.

And pray (replied Sir Charles) how are they defended from this charge?

Why, in the first place (said Mr. Willis) we have nothing to do with the various impositions, that have appeared in the world. There have been many, no doubt; but there is no more reason to believe they destroy the credit of the gospel-miracles, than to believe no historian ever spoke the truth, because many historians have asserted falsehoods. As to the interposition of

magic arts, and evil spirits, I know not what better defence the gospel miracles require, than what their divine author urged against the cavillers of his own time. *How can Satan cast out Satan?* As our Saviour's doctrines throughout had a manifest tendency to destroy the works of the devil, how is it posssible to conceive, that the devil could aim at giving credit to them.

This conversation ended entirely as Mr. Willis desired. After recapitulating a few things, which had already been said, Sir Charles candidly owned, he had nothing to reply; but added with some emotion, the illiberality and impudence of our sceptical gentry, and free-thinkers, is indeed astonishing. I have unhappily lived much among them and know well their compendious mode of making proselytes: they argue without data—substitute a jest for a reason—and overturn christianity without knowing a syllable about it.* Whether such philo-

* It is evident, how much advantage the nature of this evidence (the whole body of evidence taken together) gives to those persons who attack christianity, especially in conver-

sophers are more the objects of pity or contempt, I am in doubt; but much of the former is certainly due to those young men, who are drawn aside by such absurd instructors.

After this, sir Charles had many conversations with Mr. Willis. They examined the internal evidence of the gospel—and the grand views, which God Almighty intended in the promulgation of it—its purifying the nature of man, and restoring him to that state of happiness which he had lost. The examination of all these points became an agreeable employment to sir Charles; and began, by degrees, to influence his whole behaviour. Though courteous, and polite to his equals, and superiors, he had been rather imperious, and haughty among his domestics and tenants. All this roughness went off. He had that humble opinion of himself (the genuine effect of religion) which produced a mild behaviour to others. He considered his

sation. For it is easy to shew, in a short and lively manner, that such and such, things are liable to objection; that this, and the other thing, is of little weight in itself; but impossible to shew, in like manner, the united force of the whole argument in one view. *Butler's Analogy, Part II. chap. 7.*

fortune, which was large, rather as a trust, than as a property. He was frugal in all his own expenses, that he might be liberal to others. And, as God had placed him in a superior station of life to those around him, he thought the duties of that station required him to protect his inferiors from injury—to repress wickedness among them—and to encourage sobriety, and good manners. His religion also discovered itself in an even, serene temper; which was seldom fretted, or out of humour. In his pleasures he had been rather licentious. He had, hitherto, expressed a contempt for marriage; which always implies a libertine principle. His opinions on that head were wholly changed. He was convinced, that the restraints of religion were the sources of happiness. He married, therefore, a virtuous young lady; and, at the head of a well-regulated family, continued many years to give an example of all those duties which might be expected from a man of sense and fortune, acting under the motives of the Christian religion.

A

DIALOGUE

ON THE

MISCHIEF OF PROPAGATING DISPUTED TENETS

IN

RELIGION.

On the Mischief of propagating disputed Tenets in Religion.

Mr. Willis coming, one morning, into sir Charles's study, and finding him with Dr. Priestley's last polemical piece in his hand, asked him what he thought of it?

I think the author (said sir Charles) an acute writer; but for his argument, I know not what to say. While I read him, I am sometimes convinced; but when I shut the book, and rally the arguments on the other side, he has not sufficient weight to draw me from my old opinions. However, I am so great a friend to liberality of sentiment, that I could wish to have every doubtful question sifted to the bottom. The truth, I am persuaded, can never be injured by a scrutiny: and the free-thinker, though he may be in the wrong, yet still fights the cause of truth, if he give occasion to a solid answer.

Why, yes; (said Mr. Willis) the truth itself can never be injured by a scrutiny. But I much

doubt, whether the publication of these learned debates may not often do mischief. The case is this:—Few people can attend to the logical intricacies of an argument. They cannot deduce inferences: they see things in false lights; and often imbibe error for truth. If theological debates (for I am speaking only of these) were confined to men of learning and candour, I care not how the truth were tortured. But among weak, or unlettered people, these disputes tend only to raise prejudices. It is much easier to make a plausible objection, than to give a satisfactory answer. It is easier, also, to comprehend one, than the other. The objection is made in few words; the answer requires often a train of reasoning. Hence, among people who cannot reason, *objecting* is conceived to be *reasoning*. Exceptions are taken without foundation; these become established errors; and one error often generates another. In fact, I believe much of the infidelity amongst us at present, has arisen from the publication of these indiscreet controversies.

Sir Charles allowed there might be much truth, in what his friend had observed. But, added he, I fear your argument will carry us too

far. We may be as faultily supine in the sufferance of error, as we may be too active in the propagation of what we esteem truth. What would the reformers of the 16th century have said to your doctrine? Should the errors of popery have slept, lest men should be alarmed at the sight of a new creed?

I think an easy distinction (said Mr. Willis) may bring us together. *Mere opinions*, on either side of a question, are innocent. When these opinions *lead to practice*, they become important. When that *practice is bad*, they should be opposed. The errors of popery were, certainly, of this last kind. Many of them led directly to immorality; and this, indeed, first opened the eyes of our reformers. If the church of Rome had not insisted on indulgences for sin, and other points, which plainly shewed, she wished to fill her coffers, at the expense of religious practice, she might, probably, have slept long over such errors, as were merely speculative, though, at the same time highly absurd.

But this is the very ground (said sir Charles) which Dr. Priestley professedly takes. He tells you, that a belief in the divinity of Christ leads to idolatry; and that as such, it is the duty of every good Christian to oppose it.

Dr. Priestley (replied Mr. Willis) *must* say something of this kind to give his argument weight; but he cannot in earnest believe, that all who hold this doctrine are idolaters. He must know, that we, who pay divine homage to Christ, do it only as he is included in the godhead. We worship one God, therefore, as well as he.—In what mysterious way this union exists, we know not. But, as it is mentioned over and over in scripture; and as we are even ordered to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we cannot but believe in the union of Christ with the Father, though to us wholly incomprehensible.——One thing, however, I think, is plain, that, from Dr. Priestley's very charge of *idolatry*, an argument may fairly be drawn against Dr. Priestley himself. The divinity of Christ has always been held, I believe, at a low calculation, by two-thirds of the Christian world. The argument, however, will lose no weight, if we put the calculation lower. Now all this body of people, according to Dr. Priestley, are *idolaters*. If we ask how they came to be *idolaters*, they will answer, they mistook a number of passages in their testament, all of which *obviously* assert the divinity of Christ.

But, can any serious Christian believe, that, if the sacred writers had not *intended to inculcate the divinity of Christ*, they could possibly have let fall *so many inadvertent, and imprudent expressions*, as should, *in all ages*, have led *such numbers* of *pious and judicious* Christians into *idolatry?*

But the adversary may as well say, (replied Sir Charles) that, if the nature of Christ were *really divine*, it is equally improbable the sacred writers should drop so many expressions relating to his *humanity*. If this do not lead men into *idolatry*, it may, at least, lead them to *blasphemy*, which is nearly as bad.

The cases (Mr. Willis replied) are by no means similar. Christ's *humanity* is allowed, on both sides. On it depends the very foundation of our redemption; so that, if the sacred writers make any mention at all of our redemption by Christ, they must take notice of his *humanity*. But that is not the case of his *divinity*. If it had no existence, there was certainly no reason for mentioning it.

But the Dr. will tell you, (said Sir Charles) that more stress is laid on such expressions, than they will bear; and that various modes of speak-

ing in scripture are as liable to lead us into mistakes, as the passages which mention the divinity of Christ. As, when our Saviour calls *bread* his *flesh*, and *wine* his *blood*, numbers of people have been led to reverence bread and wine, as the *real body* and *blood* of Christ.

Very true, (said Mr. Willis;) and for the same reason they may conceive our Saviour to be a *vine*, or a *door*, or a *well of life*; for he calls himself by all these names. But surely *common sense* is a guide sufficient to enable us to judge, whether such expressions are *doctrines*, or only *metaphorical modes of speaking*. No *candid interpreter* of scripture can conceive them to be expressions, equivalent to those used in denoting the *divinity* of Christ. For, in the first place, they are expressions used only once, or, if oftener, on different subjects. But such passages as relate to the *divinity* of Christ, are interspersed, more or less, through the Old Testament. Still farther, as learning, and critical skill advanced, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and other absurdities, built on these literal interpretations of scripture, were universally rejected, except where it was the interest of a society to maintain them. But a belief in the divinity of Christ, in the *midst of all these en-*

lightened times, still holds its ground; and will, no doubt, for ever hold it among numbers in the christian world.——But you are leading me from the question. We are not inquiring whether Dr. P.'s opinions are right; but whether he is right in propagating them.

If his opinions are right, (said Sir Charles) I suppose you will allow it right in him to propagate them.

I know not (replied Mr. W.) whether I should be inclined to concede even so far. Another question arises, whether the opinion be of consequence? A breach is easily opened; and men's minds are as soon estranged from each other by a trifle, if it be maintained with obstinacy, as if it were a point of importance. And with regard to the present question, I cannot conceive that *a belief in the divinity of Christ*, taken up with modesty, (even supposing it should be an error) could draw after it the consequences Dr. Priestley dreads; or any consequences at all, of sufficient weight to risk, for its sake, the danger of unsettling the faith of some—creating prejudices in others—(as all these disputes among churchmen certainly do) and of fomenting a party-spirit in all, who engage themselves in it.

But this is conceding more than enough.—Among Dr. Priestley's antagonists, there are wise, good, and learned men, in sufficient numbers, to create, at least, a doubt in him, if he be a modest man, that *he himself* may *possibly* be in an error; and the more doubtful the doctrine, is, the mischief of propagating it is so much the worse.

But Dr. Priestley, I understand, said sir Charles, does not take the matter entirely upon himself; he appeals to antiquity. I am not myself deeply read in ecclesiastical history; but, as far as I remember, the opinions he holds are really mentioned in very early times.

Dear Sir, (said Mr. Willis) they appeared as early as the second or third century—perhaps earlier; and Dr. Priestley may lay great stress on them, if he please; but it is certain, they were then *generally* considered as *heresies*. With regard to myself, however, I freely own, I am no great advocate for appealing to antiquity in *matters of opinion*. In *matters of fact*, its evidence is certainly of great value. If I wished to know when the canon of scripture was settled—or to enquire into the earliest date of the celebration of the sacraments—or at what time

Christians began first to assemble in public worship—I could not do better than appeal to antiquity. But, as to mere *opinions*, I cannot think antiquity can add much weight, either to one side of a question, or the other. We find, that errors of various kinds began early to appear; and that it is far from being safe to rely, in all cases, even on those whom we dignify with the title of *fathers of the church*. For myself, I wish to carry no religious opinions beyond the New Testament. I am obliged to the ancients, for strengthening the evidences of Christianity; and assisting me to prove the authenticity of scripture. But, when I have gotten my New Testament fairly into my hands, I am perfectly satisfied. Polemical writings, in general, unless they combat, as I observed, *malignant errors*, can hardly, in my opinion, do any good; but will certainly do much harm. People, it is true, are wiser now, than to cut one another's throats, as they did formerly, for a difference in opinion; but differences in opinion, propagated with zeal, as they generally are, will certainly now draw men into much contention—into a breach of charity, the principal law among Christians—and will tend to raise scruples, and difficulties, in weak minds,

which may often end in infidelity; and oftener, perhaps, in the neglect of points of more consequence.

Sir Charles observed, there were few opinions, which might not be said to draw after them practical consequences; and, if an ingenious man disliked an opinion, he might easily make its consequences appear bad; and so make it a malignant error, and, of course, a subject worthy of discussion; as he thought Dr. Priestley had done on more occasions than one.

Mr. Willis allowed that was true; but, if ingenuous men (said he) cannot be restrained by their own candid minds from clothing innocent opinion with malignant error, and so making a disturbance, for no end, or some private one, there is no help for it: they must answer hereafter for being disturbers of the peace, and quiet of Christians. In the mean time, opinions which have stood the test of ages, should be well examined on every side, before they should be cried down as errors. Though we may communicate our sentiments on such subjects, innocently, among our particular friends, we should be very cautious of publishing them abroad.

I think we should (said Sir Charles.) However, perhaps on the other side, it may be said

that the stamp of orthodoxy hath been fixed on too many opinions; and too many explanations given of mysterious points, which might be better left to every one's private interpretation of the words of scripture.

I should suppose, indeed, that some of you liberal-minded men, who have no designs in exceeding proper bounds, may think the church hath gone a little too far, perhaps, in her requisition of the thirty-nine articles; and that you must reserve in private to yourselves, the sense and latitude in which you sign each article. It is impossible, that so many thousand men can think exactly alike, in the detail of such a variety of deep subjects.

And from this *impossibility* (said Mr. Willis) I argue, that the church never could suppose it. But, though she cannot certainly make all men think exactly alike, she has certainly a right to expect a *general uniformity of opinion*, and a *perfect uniformity of conduct*. None of her members can, without guilt, disturb her quiet, by setting up opinions in opposition to those, which they have subscribed. I will not say, whether she hath not tied the knot a little too tight. Perhaps she has. But, for my own part, when I contemplate the many mischiefs that

have arisen, and are continually arising, from the licence men take in spreading their crude opinions, I cannot help wishing, that some method could be found, short of persecution, to keep all these learned disturbers of the public peace, a little more within bounds. Let them believe, and worship, as they think best; I should only wish them to keep their opinions to themselves.

It is, indeed, (said sir Charles) a pity, that the press, from which so many advantages are derived; and through which we occasionally express our freest thoughts with great advantage, should, in many instances, be an engine teeming with so much mischief.

In truth it is: (said Mr. Willis) it certainly does not bring its benefit without its evil. In private life we experience the mischief of it—in politics also—and in religion. But it is an evil, I fear, which we must quietly submit to, in many other things, besides the liberty of the press. It is a difficult matter to sever, in most cases, the use from the abuse. The church has judiciously imposed silence on her own members, with regard to a variety of points; and I wish the sectaries would follow her example. They may make their Articles, if they please, more liberal, and less offensive.

Do you suppose (said sir Charles) it would be possible to persuade our neighbour, Dr. Turner, to subscribe Articles? You might as easily, I dare say, persuade him to put on a surplice.

Dr. Turner, (said Mr. Willis) wants no Articles to confine him. Good man! he will never give any body offence with his opinions. If all sectaries were as inoffensive as Dr. Turner, I should never wish to prescribe them rules.

Do not think (said sir Charles) I meant any reflection upon him: I value him highly. You must, however, allow, he is a little formal and precise in his manners, and therefore, I should suppose, in his opinions.

I doubt (replied Mr. Willis) whether your inference is just: whatever his *manner* may be, his *opinions* are all liberal; and we wonder how such a man can be separated from us by a line, which to him, I dare say, is nearly invisible. If, however, he maintain any opinion which does not coincide with what is commonly believed, I dare answer for him, he will never disturb other people with it.

After all, (said sir Charles) it appears odd to me, that people do not think more alike on religious subjects, than they do. We all take

our religion from the same book; and, as this book was written to instruct the low and ignorant, one should have imagined, that, if not understood by all, exactly in the same sense, it might have been so nearly in the same sense, as to prevent much dispute.

And this would be the case, (said Mr. Willis) if it were read only by well-meaning people—that is, by such as read without prejudice. But we are all, more or less, subject to prejudice. Our opinions are often only *received prejudices*; and we have rarely the candour to allow conviction, even when we feel it.

It is too common a case, I fear; (replied sir Charles) and it appears to me, that we ought, from hence, to draw one of our strongest arguments for caution in publishing our opinions. They may be prejudices.

Certainly; (said Mr. Willis) and if my doctrine be true, that scriptural difficulties may be among the means of discipline in a state of trial, we have still more ground for caution. Let us consider them as trials of our own faith, instead of making them matters of perplexity to others. —One great source of our religious disputes is the narrow boundary, in which the polemic

often confines them. In our interpretations of scripture, we should refer rather to the general idea, and scope of the gospel, than to a few parts, as is too often the case. Thus Dr. Priestley, in rejecting the divinity of Christ, makes the most of all those texts, in which his humanity is mentioned; but pays little regard to those, which mentions the sacrifice of his death; and his atonement for sin; and yet these ideas as manifestly pervade the gospel, as those which mention his humanity. Thus again, it is an opinion, among some religionists, that faith can only be obtained by the immediate influx, or inspiration of the grace of God,—that we are to wait for this holy influence, till it please God to pour it into our hearts; and are to expect no assistance in this matter from the use of our own reason, or endeavours. If they are asked, on what ground they hold this opinion, they will quote *some text* of scripture; probably that of St. Paul.—*By grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God.* Now here is plain proof, you see, from scripture, that we have nothing to do ourselves in the acquisition of faith; but must rest it entirely upon the grace of God.—That cannot be, says

another religionist; for our Saviour bids us ground our faith on his miracles: *if ye believe not me, believe the works*: and St. Paul tells us as plainly, that *faith cometh by hearing*. Whereas, if both these religionists should consult the *whole scheme* of the gospel, they would find all to be clear, and consistent; it is the *dispensation of the gospel itself*, that is the *gift of God*, which we are to receive through faith. At the same time, it seems to be the general doctrine of scripture, that, although *evidence* should be the *foundation* of our faith, we cannot make that faith effectual to a good life, without drawing the grace of God upon it through prayer, and our best endeavours.

There is something very offensive to me, (said sir Charles) in setting up faith in opposition to good works; and, I fear, very misleading to the people. It seems a doctrine much more pernicious, than that of deriving faith entirely from divine inspiration.

The ablest Solfidians, (replied Mr. Willis) explain the *doctrine of faith, and works*, in a manner, by no means irrational. They lay the chief stress on faith; because, as they justly assert, good works will of course follow a sound

faith; as good fruit will always be produced by a good tree; and I dare say, if you were to hear Mr. Probin on this subject, you would hear nothing from him, but what was pious, rational, and instructive. I will not say, but he might speak *less on works*, than you might think scriptural; and give an *indiscreet audience* (which is, I think with you, the great danger) too much ground to rest upon faith. He might also touch on other doctrines, in which you would not, perhaps, entirely follow him. In general however, you would find him a serious, sensible preacher; under whom any audience, that can reflect, and distinguish, might improve.—But the mischief lies here. It is not in general thought necessary, that the ministers of this persuasion should be men of candour, and temper, like our neighbour Probin; nor indeed is it thought commonly necessary, that they should borrow the least aid from human learning.—With heads, therefore, full of enthusiastic ideas; uninformed by any rational inquiries; and often with a very small portion of common sense, the generality of them sally forth on the great errand of instructing mankind. The apostles, they tell you, were illiterate men, like them-

selves; but they forget, that the apostles really were, what these preachers only pretend to be, divinely inspired. Such preachers often make lamentable work of faith, and every other subject they handle.

And yet I have often heard, (said sir Charles) that these illiterate itinerants have had a great effect on their congregations; and have roused in them a sense of religion, to which they were before strangers.

I believe, indeed, (returned Mr. Willis) that when the preacher, and his congregation are suited to each other, great effects may be wrought; and bad people may be sometimes terrified out of their wickedness. The enthusiastic manner of these illiterate preachers (for they all believe themselves full of the holy spirit) though fraught with errant nonsense, is very sympathetic. Fanatic preaching was in all ages the same:

> ——————————Pectus anhelum
> Et rabie fera corda tument majorque videri
> Nec mortale sonans, afflata est numine quando
> Jam propiore dei.————————

The effect also is commonly the same.

> ————Gelidus Teneris per dura cucurrit
> Ossa tremor.————————

But when the preacher, and his congregation are of different complexions,—that is, when the congregation is made up of informed people, and the minister is weak, and enthusiastic, his heavenly pretensions are disregarded; and his audience are inclined rather to smile, than to approve. It is only among low, ignorant and weak people, that low, ignorant and weak teachers can have any effect.

No doubt, (said Sir Charles) there must be a fellow-feeling between the cause and the effect. —A Clergyman of my acquaintance, wishing for the assistance of a serious curate, found a very pious young man; but he was, at the same time, weak, and very enthusiastic. His doctrine of course was so ill accommodated to the discerning part of his audience, that my friend wished to have him removed; and, by managing the matter with a leading person of the same persuasion, got it effected. The young man went to London, where he obtained a church frequented by those of his own manner of thinking. But his audience here, too, being more enlightened than their teacher, many of them took offence, and went in quest of better doctrine. I had this account from a very pious

old lady, an aunt of mine, who was one of the seceders.—But this same Clergyman, who got an enthusiastic Curate removed from his parish, acted very differently under different circumstances. His parish was very extensive; and one part of it lay so wide, that the inhabitants rarely attended the church, and were become very barbarous. He conversed with them—he sent several of their children to school—he distributed good books among them—he gave them cloaths—and exhorted them to come to church: but his endeavours produced little effect. Sometime after, an unordained teacher, of the persuasion we are describing, came among them; and a very ordinary one he was. However, the Clergyman was so far from molesting him, that he did every thing in his power (except openly espousing him, which he thought wrong) to incourage him.

And I think (replied Mr. Willis) he did right; for the preacher being more in unison with his audience, would do more than a man of sense and learning, however well-inclined, could possibly have done. But it is time now to gather all these loose observations into the thread of our argument. It is not preaching his own opinions to his own congregation, that my argu-

ment discourages. I allow a Jew, in his synagogue, to adduce arguments against christianity; a Papist, in his chapel, to reject the common use of scripture; or a Unitarian to assert the humanity of Christ, if he be so persuaded, in his meeting-house. All this is fair and pertinent: but I should wish these opinions to go no farther; and that they who hold them should forbear to publish, and disturb their peaceable neighbours. Let men be satisfied with keeping their particular opinions to themselves; modesty, humility, and a love of order, require it. We should not, indeed, if we were thus cautious, have the honour of maintaining new opinions—of standing forth as staunch polemics—of being at the head of religious parties—of forming new Christian assembles—but, what is better, mankind would be kept more peaceable, and religion more pure; as much of the sediment and lees, which now disturb it, would fall to the bottom.

Mr. Willis had just ended, when a servant entered, and informed Sir Charles, that colonel Brett, a neighbouring justice of the peace, desired to speak with him on some county-business, then depending: on which Mr. Willis took his hat, and retired home.

THE ADVANTAGES OF A

TOWN LIFE,

AND

A COUNTRY LIFE,

Compared.

The Advantages of a Town Life, and a Country Life, compared.

I THINK (said Mr. Willis to his friend, as they were walking one afternoon in sir Charles's park) you have quite lost your relish for the capital.—I do not recollect you have been in London these six years.

I believe not, (answered sir Charles) if you except the few weeks I spent there about two years ago, on a very unpleasant occasion, which you may remember. I have, indeed, renounced many of my old ideas of pleasure and amusement.

It is happy (said Mr. Willis) when an increase of years brings on an increase of wisdom. But I have often wondered, how an attachment to London could so long find any place in a breast like yours: especially, as a kind providence has given you, here, a situation abounding with all the beauties of nature.

But there are many things (replied sir Charles) which facinate the minds of men, besides the beauties of nature.

It is true (said Mr. Willis;) but a wise man rather suspects what is fascinating, and considers only what is eligible.

And in that light (said sir Charles) London contains much that may interest even a wise man's attention. Here he gratifies his passion for books—he sees what publications are going forward—he has the opportunity of conversing with the ablest, and most learned, men of all professions—he listens to the debates of parliament—and makes himself acquainted with the politics of his own country, and those of Europe—he meets his friends from all parts of the country—I may say, from all parts of the world—he sees every thing, that is beautiful in arts—and many things that are curious in nature. All come to London to be exhibited. Here likewise he frequents the most elegant amusements—he visits the most celebrated artists, and attends their exhibitions—he resorts to theatres, where the best actors are engaged; and listens to concerts by the ablest performers. Here, too, he frequents the most brilliant assem-

blies—and sees the best company in the easiest manner. Meetings, too, of other kinds he finds in abundance, as it may suit his humour or inclination. He may spend his vacant hour in the light chat of a coffee-house—or he may settle the politics of Europe with some *corps diplomatique*—or he may attend a board of antiquarians—or he may play at chess, or at cards, or any other amusement, with those who like it as much as he does—or he may sing songs, and catches, at a tavern, with the choice spirits of the day. Here, too, by keeping variety of company, he improves his talents in conversation; and learns to express himself with ease, and readiness on every subject.

And now, my dear Sir, (said Mr. Willis) as you have given me the items of this account, let me sum it up, and see to what the total amounts. I doubt we shall find it, in general, made up of cyphers, without one leading figure of any consequence to give it value; the whole together seems to me a scene of dissipation.

No doubt (said sir Charles) London is a scene of dissipation; and as such I have relinquished it. But I think, bad as it is, that censure is too general and too severe. It was once my plan of life

to offer myself as a member for the county—to enter into civil affairs, and, of course, to spend a great part of my time in town; but I did not think myself enough acquainted with the constitution of my country to become one of its legislators: or, perhaps, an indolent temper took possession of me, as we are not always acquainted with our own motives. Be that as it may, I changed my resolution, and have adopted the character of a country gentleman. However, my dear Sir, though I have taken my leave of London, probably for life, unless any occasional business should call me there, I cannot allow that concise mode of summing up all its rational and irrational amusements together, in a total of cyphers.

The only way (said Mr. Willis) to detect the fallacy of an account, is to examine the several articles of it separately, and see in which of them the error lies. Now, I should be glad to know, in which of these articles there is solid inducement enough to make up for the risk, which a young man of fortune runs, among the amusements of London. I speak not of those who have business and professions to follow; which, it may be hoped, will be a balance against the

allurements of pleasure. I speak only of those who have nothing to do, but to go, as you did formerly, in quest of the amusements—or, if you please, the advantages it offers.

I should think (said sir Charles) that the new books of various kinds, we may meet with, the men of letters, and refined conversation we may converse with, the——

If you please (replied Mr. Willis) we will rest a little on these two articles, before we proceed further. You say, your young man of fashion may meet with a variety of new books—which, we are to suppose, he cannot easily meet with elsewhere. We must first, then, conceive him to be, what few young men of fashion are, a bookish young man—that is, fonder of instruction, than of amusement: and even then, let us ask what those new books are, which are only to be had in London? You do not mean, I suppose, the political pamphlets, and trash of the day, which are continually spawning in shop windows, and are not worth the expense of sending into the country. This is a kind of reading which, I should think, will not tend to make him either wiser or better. Nor do you mean, I suppose, the MSS. and curious volumes, which

may be consulted in the Museum, and other public libraries. If these are his pursuit, I shall conclude him to be an ingenious, and studious young man; and shall rank him among those, who have rational employment in London. But as to other books, all that are good, soon find their way, through advertisements, into the country.

True (said sir Charles;) but you would wish, sometimes, to turn over a few pages of a book, or hear something about it, before you purchased it. Besides, some books are so expensive, that you only wish to look at them; and others you wish only, in some parts, to consult. Now, London affords you an opportunity of doing all this, perhaps better than any other part of the kingdom.

It may be so, (replied Mr. Willis) in some instances; but, in my opinion, it is, in general, of no great consequence. I know little advantage, that arises from this superficial intercourse with books. I am no advocate for a variety of reading. A few books, well read and digested, are better than a library. When I first left college, I spent the best part of a winter in an excellent library, belonging to a dignitary of the church, to whom I was a temporary curate. Here

I met with numbers of books, which I had never heard of before. I read in one, then in another; amused by all in the highest degree. But, when I summed up my gains, at the end of the winter, I found I had gotten very little: I had made myself master of a variety of names, but of no one subject. You remember Robertson, of Baliol, who was certainly one of the best-informed men in the university; and yet it was his constant theme, that a variety of books tended to check learning, rather than advance it. Many a time I have heard him quote Pliny's rule, in reading, *non multa, sed multum.* About three years ago, when I was at Shrewsbury, I paid him a visit at his parsonage. His stock of learning, I doubt not, was still more improved; but his whole library was compressed within two or three very moderate shelves. He had one, or two, of the best books on every subject he chose to pursue. In his own profession he had the most. Half his library consisted of divinity; but I do not recollect one polemic among them. He was able himself to answer the chief objections that could be raised on almost any subject, and thought it unnecessary to incumber his study with the answers of others.

I remember Robertson, very well, (said sir Charles) and was always a little overawed, when I happened to be in his company. But such a man as Robertson was born a scholar. I believe however, in general, that scraps of various reading, before foundations are well laid, signify very little.

They signify thus much, (replied Mr. Willis) they often turn young men into pert puppies.—I have seen numbers of these London-students, who, in their own conceits, were very clever fellows; but, in the opinion of all sober people, egregious coxcombs.

Your opinion, then, (said sir Charles) is, that, if a man have any curious point of literature to investigate, with a view either of amusing himself, or bringing it before the public, a variety of books may often be necessary; but, if he wish only to make himself a sound scholar, his reading may be confined within a smaller compass.

That is just my opinion, (said Mr. Willis) but then you will consider, that few young men of fashion come under the former of these descriptions. Of course, therefore, few of them need go to London to study.—I am afraid, we shall have no better tale to tell of the other source

of a London education—the company of men of letters. We seldom, I believe, find men of this stamp consorting with unfledged boys. Indeed, a fashionable young man, undisciplined, (if I may so speak) by literature, seldom finds himself easy in such company. His resort, therefore, is chiefly among what are called *well-bred men*; to whom a fashionable dress is a sufficient introduction, and who are commonly as ignorant and unprincipled as himself.—Hence his conversation becomes noisy, overbearing, and uninteresting—very fluent—very important — and yet made up of nothing but—shreads of fashionable nonsense.—Thus, from vague reading, and dipping into a multiplicity of books, he becomes a pert coxcomb; and, from frequenting the only company to which he can have access, he becomes an impertinent companion. His clang is incessant, and insufferable, and is always sure to be too loud for any attempt, that may be made to entertain a company with good sense, and information. The young Baronet, who called upon you, the other day, gave us, I thought, the exact model of a London-education. He was noisy, vain, and talkative: and yet he said nothing, that was worth repeating after

him. I saw how severely you were baited, and pitied you heartily. Even Lady Rennet, with all her good nature, could not help giving him, now and then, a sly reproof: but he was fenced in a doublet of self-importance, and could not feel it.—Formed characters, no doubt, may find great advantage by conversing with such characters as may be found in London. But the commerce of conversation is something like every other kind of commerce; if people have nothing to offer in exchange, there can only be little intercourse.

But what are we to say, (said sir Charles) to the many curious exhibitions of art, and nature, that are to be seen in London, and no where else? Prints—pictures—foreign rarities—works of ingenuity—and curious animals, from different parts of the world.

All these things (replied Mr. Willis) I would have a young gentleman acquainted with, if he could see them without danger; they open his mind, and give him new ideas. All I could wish is, that he should not go beyond these useful gratifications; that he should consider *the sight of those things*, as the end of his pursuit; and leave a scene of pleasure, before it begin to corrupt him.

But how shall we apply this, (said sir Charles) to the sons of such lords, and senators, as come to town on business, and wish to bring their families with them—many of them just verging into manhood—and young ladies, who must have London-masters; and are as susceptible of London dissipation, as their brothers.

Aye, (said Mr. Willis) I am afraid here lies the root of the evil. Early propensities, and inclinations, are formed; and a lust for pleasure begins, before its joys are really tasted.——As to the fashionable mode of educating young women, I own I am no advocate for it. It is something very different from what the apostle calls, *the ornament of a meek, and quiet spirit.* I am far from despising the elegant accomplishments of young women of fashion. But I should wish such accomplishments only to be considered in a secondary light; and all that is necessary on this head, I suppose might be had at home. At least I think I have on my side, the practice of one good lady, not very far off, to whose judgment I durst venture to appeal. Indeed I believe, sufficient masters might be found in most parts of England. If they were encouraged, they certainly might: and the young lady

would be better qualified for the duties of life, by never supposing it was necessary for her to go to London. Even *learning to stay at home* is a great point of education. And, if mothers cannot stay with daughters, some prudent relative, or governess, might supply her room.—If, however, they must be brought to London, let them be introduced into none of its gaieties. Let them be kept perfectly quiet: and every *good mother* will restrain herself for the sake of her daughters.—But, indeed, I fear the mothers themselves are the great seducers of their daughters. I have sometimes been tempted to wish, that a censor might be appointed, by authority, at the corner of every street, to question each lady-passenger, on what errand she was bent; and, if she would not give a good account of herself, to stop her progress.

I should be highly amused, (said sir Charles) smiling, to see you execute an office of that kind. When each fair itinerant made her request,—Pray, sir, let me go to the opera—I beg, sir, you will not prevent my going to a play—or to a rout—or perhaps a shopping—with what gravity you would turn to the coachman, and, without vouchsafing the poor lady an

answer, order him to turn his horses round, and carry his lady immediately home.—I like your scheme mightily. If you could bring it to bear, it would keep many a gadding female out of mischief—it would save the shopkeeper much trouble—it would make the streets more comfortable, and commodious for those who had real business;—and, above all, it would keep mothers from misleading their daughters.—But, in the mean time, what shall we do with the young men? You will, at no rate, leave them in London. They are more unmanageable animals than girls; the girls can only pout: but the young men will run riot. Must we leave them at home also to hunt—to drink—to frequent low company—to debauch the tenants daughters; and get into all manner of mischief.

Aye, (replied Mr. Willis) here are Scylla and Charibdis realized. You cannot avoid one, without running into the other. If I had a fashionable young man of the present age to educate, I should be utterly at a loss what step to take. One of the best young men I was ever acquainted with, ran wild many years, before he grew serious, and became a useful member of society.

He had not perhaps, during that time, (said sir Charles) the advantage of a wise and prudent friend to point out to him his mistakes.—Young men, however, must be amused; and if you do not find amusement for them, they will find it for themselves.—Though I should be afraid of carrying them to London, I should be sorry to leave them at home among their fathers grooms, and game-keepers. Foreign travel has certainly its use; but as certainly its mischief, at the age at which young men are commonly sent abroad. In the management however of a young man, much depends upon the young man himself. If he have parts, and is of a studious turn, it may be easy to lead his amusements,—the various fields of literature afford many a flowery path. Or, if he be a young man of taste, and his genius point towards the arts, you may easily find a way to gratify and amuse him. But, as a *Mercury cannot be carved out of every block*, we must suppose, that many a young man will be much the reverse of what he should be. He may be headstrong and unmanageable, or, what is worse, he may be ill-disposed and vicious. With such a young man what can be done?—In general,

however, there is one mode of amusement, which has rarely, if ever, been tried, so far as I know; and yet it is, I think, as profitable as any, to engage the attention of a young man of fortune. At the same time, it is one of the most useful amusements in which he can be engaged; and that is *domestic travel*. After the common course of his school education is finished, instead of sending him either abroad, or to a university, I would have him visit the different parts of his own country, and make himself acquainted with every circumstance relating to it. There should not be a corner of England, Wales, Scotland, or Ireland, which he should not investigate. And in this agreeable amusement, I should not care, if he spent more than half a dozen of his early years.—I should endeavour to procure him an agreeable companion, somewhat older than himself; but a man of letters, and of a pleasant temper. I should not wish them to stay long at any place—a week here, or a fortnight there, as different places were, more or less, worth his attention. Recommendations might every where be had; and, in a light carriage, the two friends might easily carry with them a few books, which would make

study and amusement go hand in hand. Every two or three months, as it happened, they might return home for a few weeks; which would give them a fresh appetite for a new tour. Such a plan, I think, might contribute to keep the pleasures of London, for some time, out of sight. I am persuaded, if nothing more eligible fall out, I shall, at a proper time, take some such method with Anthony.

I highly approve your plan; (said Mr. Willis) at least as far as I can judge of a practical matter from theory. But there is one thing which I should require of my young travellers; and that is, to keep an exact and daily journal of every thing they saw and heard.—I mean something more than what is commonly called a diary. I should wish them also to keep an exact account of their expenses. No part of worldly knowledge is more necessary to a young man, than to understand well the depth of his pocket. Embarrassed affairs are the constant foundation of wretchedness, meanness, and often of vice. But now, my dear Sir, I must remind you, that we are rather digressing from our question. I was solicitous to know, from a person of experience, whether a wise man would

wish to live in London, or the country; and you have put me off, with a lesson on education.

Softly, my dear sir, (said Sir Charles:) you wished to know what a wise man should do; and I thought it right first to procure a wise man for you.

And now we have procured him, (answered Mr. Willis) shall he shew his wisdom by living in London, or in the Country?

You know, (replied Sir Charles,) how I have divided the question already,—My practice speaks my opinion.—And with regard to a young man of fashion and fortune, who has no employment for his time, I am decidedly, you see, of your opinion, that London is the worst place he can live in.—Only I must still assert, that a formed character, or a *wise* man, if you chuse that appellation, will find many modes of rational amusement, and instruction in London, which he will find no where else.

I readily allow it, (said Mr. Willis;) but even on that supposition, would you wish him to take up his abode there in preference to the Country.

If he like it, (said Sir Charles,) let him. I shall not dispute the matter with him.

But I will, (returned Mr. Willis,) with more eagerness, than he commonly spoke.—It is hardly possible for him to live constantly in London, unless he have business to engage him, without catching something from the follies, and dissipation, which will surround him there. A man may possibly escape the plague in an infected place; but no wise man would chuse to run the risk.

Indeed, (said sir Charles) if London be like a place infected with the plague, a man would wish to get out of it as fast as he could. But I hope the air of London is not so very infectious:—you are too severe. Do you know, that three of the greatest works that ever appeared in England, were all composed in London—Bacon's Essays—Newton's Optics—and Milton's Paradise Lost.—Besides, I am apt to believe, there are not only as many learned men, but as many pious and religious people in London, as in any part of England.

Aye, surely; (said Mr. Willis) or I should have feared, that London would, long ago, have been destroyed with fire and brimstone. But I suppose, all these pious and religious people are either such as have employments in London,

which they cannot leave—or they are parents, who put a restraint upon themselves by living in London, for the sake of giving a safe home to their children, who are obliged to live there;—or, perhaps, they are old, infirm people, who shut themselves up, and never go abroad, but to the neighbouring church. My argument, excluding all these, is levelled only at such men of fortune, especially young men, as *may* live where they please, but prefer London to the Country, for the sake of its affording a more amusing, and agreeable mode of life.

I allow (said sir Charles) they shew a *bad taste*, but I should be sorry to brand them with having a *depraved one.*

I know not what else to call it; (replied Mr. Willis) the amusements of London have, at least, a tendency to dissipate thought and reflection; and leave the mind very ill prepared for virtuous sentiment of any kind. He who is immersed in them, is always hurried out of himself. He has not time to consider what is *doing within:* and he who lives only in contact with them, (if I may so speak) is in danger of being drawn into some vortex; from which, if he be not swallowed up, it will not be easy for him to

escape. Add to this, that many of these amusements have a vicious tendency. In short, I never knew a young fellow, without some certain occupation for his leisure, stay any time in town, but he returned the worse; and many a one I have known ruined by it.*

I believe you knew sir William Nash? His son is a recent instance. He was a genteel young man, and not ill disposed. His fortune set him above the necessity of any profession; and being tired of an idle life, he went into the army. As the times were peaceable, his father made no objection. Soon after, however, the war broke out,—troops were sent into Germany; and among them the regiment in which he

* ——— To gain-devoted cities flow,
As to a common, and most noisome sewer,
The dregs and feculence of every land.
In cities, foul example, on most minds,
Begets its likeness.—Rank abundance breeds,
In gross and pampered cities—sloth, and lust,
And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.
In cities—Vice is hidden with most ease;
Or seen with least reproach. And Virtue, taught
By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there
Beyond the achievement of successful flight.

served. His father and mother were now distressed beyond sufferance. He was an only child; and had hitherto been a dutiful one. In short, when the campaign was over, he got leave of absence—returned home—and, at his father's earnest request, sold his commission.—He now commenced a fine gentleman, in the politest part of London, where his father, after he left business, commonly resided. Here he entered into all the gaieties of the town. Happy had it been, both for him and his father, if he had been permitted to stay where he was. The dangers of Germany were trifling, compared with the dangers of London. His excesses were so great, and his gaming-debts, and other expenses, so enormous, that a gentleman, the other day, told me, he had been a witness to the ravings of his poor father, who stamped on the ground, and vehemently exclaimed—"*He wished to heaven he had never had a son.*"

Aye—(said sir Charles) severe retributions of this kind, I fear, often befal imprudent, and too-indulgent parents;—they know not what they do, when they initiate their children, or suffer them to initiate themselves, in these horrid mysteries. But, however, this is viewing

our subject in the worst light. We all allow, that the amusements of London are pernicious to youth. I have allowed, also, that the young man seldom acquires much knowledge in London, either from books or company. But you will surely grant it to be a very eligible place for men of science—a kind of liberal academy, where they may reap mutual advantage, by mutual intercourse.

If these men of science (said Mr. Willis) keep aloof from all those brilliant assemblies, and seducing entertainments, which are every where spread before them, and which tend to corrupt even the formed character, I have not much to object. Only still I think they prefer the improvement of the *mind*, to the improvement of the *heart*. By rational and learned conversation, many hints are, undoubtedly, struck out which books cannot furnish; and which tend much to improve the mind, in every branch of science. And though the country may afford such conversation in a degree, yet I allow not so copiously as it may be had in London. But, on the other hand, the capital furnishes numerous schools of false philosophy, in which very corrupt principles are learned. In science, there

is often a fashion, in favour of some tenet, or some author—which, being the subject of every conversation, leads to prejudice. On this, however, I lay not much stress. But false notions in politics, under the specious ideas of liberty, melioration, and I know not what nonsense, come nearer home. I have known many a man come fraught from the capital with such notions, which he has gleaned from seditious pamphlets, in shop windows—from the disaffected, and discontented speeches of opposition members—and from clubs and meetings—where the most licentious speeches are the most applauded. But, what I most dread in these nurseries, are the principles of irreligion. Men are taught to bring every thing to the test of reason, except their own conduct; and see more truth in Deism, or even in Atheism, than in the gospel. Whereas, in the country, these licentious opinions, except when imported from the capital, are more rare; and the simple inhabitant is content to take his religionfrom his Bible, and Testament. Then again, as to all practical matters, the serenity of the country is surely more adapted to virtuous feelings, than the noise, and bustle, of a capital. An old Gentleman, who used to

leave his country obscurity, generally once a year, to visit some relations in London, would never stay longer than a day or two; and, when pressed to prolong his visit, would cry—"No, "no, I'll go back again; you are all mad "here." "*Bene qui latuit, bene vixit,*" said the philosopher; and the poet, I think, pretty nearly translates him:

> Oh! friendly to the best pursuits of man—
> Friendly to thought, to Virtue, and to peace,
> Domestic life—in rural leisure pass'd!

It is an unhappy truth—but I think it is a truth—that, while an intercourse with the works of Nature tend to improve *the heart*, an intercourse with mankind has, too generally, a tendency to corrupt it. Men get rid of their honest ideas, by mixing with each other; they learn the ways of the world;—and, if they get more knowledge, they too often barter for it the simplicity of their characters. In short, where there are numbers of people together, restraint is more thrown off—they keep each other in countenance, and there is commonly more wickedness, than could be found, perhaps, in double

the number of people, if they lived separately. Hence it is, that numerous meetings of all kinds —elections—camps—fairs—public diversions, are all commonly scenes of immorality. Hence, also, great towns abound in profligacy and ill-manners; and, what is worse, great roads, which are, in many respects, so beneficial, tend greatly to disseminate the manners of the town in the country. I know some places, through which these great roads have run, especially where stages are established—changed, even in my memory, from places of great simplicity, into scenes of much dissipation. I cannot help, therefore, considering London as the tainted part of the kingdom, from whence corruption is spread into the country, through a thousand channels. A century or two ago, the increase of London was thought a subject for the notice of the legislature:* but of late, I know not for

* We do not meet with many things of James the first worth recording; but he once made a good speech in the Star Chamber, on this subject. "He took notice of those "swarms of gentry, who, through the instigation of their "wives, or to new-model and fashion their daughters—(who, "if they are unmarried, wear their reputations—if married, "lose their reputations and rob their husband's purses)—neg-

what reason, it has been disregarded. It has, of course, therefore, within that time almost doubled itself.

If London (replied sir Charles) sow the seed, I believe your country is ready to afford an excellent soil to receive it.

There is as little rationality in our gentry, so far as I can discover, when they are among their woods and lawns, as when they are pursuing the pleasures of the town. Assemblies, and clubs, and card-playing, and horse-races, and fox-hunting, and drinking, and cock-fighting, and gaming, and late hours, and idle visiting—furnish a bill of fare for every day of the week.

" lect their country hospitality, and cumber the city—which
" is a general nuisance to the kingdom; being as the spleen
" to the body, which, as it over-grows, the body wastes.
" He requires, therefore, that, as a proclamation could not
" keep them at home, the power of the Star Chamber
" should not only regulate them, but the exorbitancy, also,
" of the new buildings about the city, which he much re-
" pined at, as being a shelter for them, when they spent
" their estates in coaches, lacqueys, and clothes, like
" Frenchmen;—living miserably in their houses, like
" Italians;—and becoming apes to other nations;—whereas,
" it was the honour of the English nobility and gentry,
" above all countries in the world, to be hospitable amongst
" their tenants."

Not long ago, I had some little business with one of my neighbours, just returned from London, and it was a full fortnight before I could procure a vacant day;—the family being immersed in a train of engagements, during that whole period. It is amusing, at the same time, to see with what sovereign contempt these town-gentry treat us simple inhabitants of the country. Norris told me, the other day, that a certain great man in his neighbourhood, generally brings down with him a few of the choice spirits of his happier hours, to make the two or three months he spends at his seat in the country supportable. But, to preserve his popularity among the neighbouring gentlemen, he keeps two public days every week, when he is very civil to them at dinner, and laughs at them over his bottle, in the evening. One of his friends, describing their mode of living, said, they had spent a very brilliant and joyous time with his grace—except, added he, on those days—*when the natives came down upon us.*

Aye (said Mr. Willis,) I dread such *natives* as these *coming down* upon *us*, as much as they can our coming down upon them. I should wish to have them shut up in London, as in a lazaretto;

and their corrupting manners confined within as small a compass as I could. I dread to see them, and their servants, scattered over the country, instructing the peasantry to follow them, as far as they can, in the dissipating pleasures of the capital; and particularly in the breach of the sabbath, which I apprehend to be one of the most alarming symptoms amongst us of the decay of national manners. I consider the sabbath as a grand religious landmark; and, when that is removed, I fear all will be confusion. But now, my dear Sir, you do not see, perhaps, how you are misleading me; and drawing my question aside by a false scent. I was breeding up a set of sober gentry, who were to have nothing to do with the dissipations of London; but were to lead rational lives in the country,—when you pour down upon me an inundation of people, who have been already debauched in London; and then cry, look here—the country affords you nothing better than the town. This is not fair, my good Sir; let me educate my own people, and I dare engage, I shall shew you a different race. Take your rioters away; of *them* I can certainly make nothing. After all, however, I am ready to allow, that, in both

places, the wrong prevails over the right—the improper over the decorous. But we must, however, still say this for the country, that its native pleasures have, on the whole, a tendency rather to *mislead*—while those of the town have a tendency to *vitiate*. Thus, for instance, you may see a country gentleman hunting, perhaps, every day in the week. It is bad, no doubt. In so profuse a waste of time, there can be little provision made for the mind; and an unfurnished head must be the consequence. But still the heart may remain tolerably sound; it may be humane, hospitable, and kind to a neighbour. But, if the same country gentleman carry his sporting ideas to London, and, instead of hunting hares or foxes, hunts after titles or places, he will probably eradicate every good quality of his heart. Again, in the country, you may hear a great profusion of nonsensical conversation, and idle chat, which is grating to the ears of a man of sense; but in London, at the levees, and tables of the great, and the routs of fashionable people, you learn the arts of insincerity—the arts of setting your words and thoughts at variance—the arts of promising, and of throwing the simpering smile of assent on proposals

you detest—on people you abhor, and whom you are determined, as far as you can, to oppose and ruin. What depredation does all this make in the heart! What sentiments of truth can reside in a breast, which is practised in all this vile insincerity? In the country, again, you may see the squire drink deep, and hear him singing and roaring glees and catches to a late hour. He is reprehensible, no doubt; but he is a venial offender, in comparison of him, who frequents the atheistical club, the brothel dedicated to prostitution, or the dark divan of a gaming-house.

I think however, my dear sir, (said Sir Charles,) from your own account, the native inhabitants of the country are not set in the most amiable light. One should have thought, from the favourable ideas you have given us of these happy scenes of serenity and peace, they might have produced something better than the exceptionable characters you have described.

I have given you only their worst side, (said Mr. Willis,) but, from this account you must grant (which is all my argument aimed at) that the worst-disposed people in the Country, are not so bad as they might have been if they had carried their bad dispositions to London.—You

will not, however, suppose, that such people are my pupils—or those, on whom the Country has produced its best effects.—All plans of moral improvement, no doubt, have their limits,—their *ne plus ultra*; and we cannot expect perfection from any of them.—Though we cannot therefore suppose a Country-life will make men all we could wish, yet, still we recommend it as a better school for improvement, than the City.—Its advantages are various.

By the *advantages* of a Country-life, (said Sir Charles,) I suppose you mean chiefly its *moral advantages*—its tendency to incourage and promote virtue and religion.

I do, (replied Mr. Willis).—Now, in the first place, the *quietness, and stillness* of the Country is propitious to thought, and reflection. Noise and riot may be introduced any where: but, if a man seek quiet, the Country is surely the place, where he may best find it. The garden, the field, or the wood, will always afford solitude. Even the village-sounds, heard remotely, instead of interrupting the solitary idea, impress it perhaps still more strongly.*

* Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence———————

The beating of the distant flail—the sound of carriage-wheels, heard remote on the public-road—the lowing of cattle in the meadows below, are all sounds of that solitary kind.—By removing interruption to a distance, they seem to make solitude more secure. The still noises of the night, when every wind is hushed, add also to the solemnity of silence, and aid meditation—the owl—the distant dog—the sheep-bell—and the village clock.*

You look sometimes on *infinite space*, as the philosopher speaks. Your eyes are open: but you see nothing distinctly.—In the same way these sounds impress the ear. You hear them, but they are lost in the solitude of the scene. The song of the nightingale is indeed too melodious to be

* An elegant author speaking of some modes of simple music, says, we listen to such music, as we do to the pleasing murmur of a neighbouring brook—the whisper of the passing breeze, or the distant warblings of the lark, or nightingale: and, if agreeable natural noises have the power of soothing the contemplative mind, without interrupting its contemplations, simple musical effusions must assuredly have that power in a superior degree. See Mason's Essay on Church Music, p. 61.

blended with the stillness of the night.—It arrests the ear; and, till its melody pauses, contemplation ceases.

But how few are there, (said Sir Charles,) to whom this stillness is really soothing?—To numbers, the rumbling of a dray—the rattling of a coach—or the screaming of a street-cry, is more congenial. I fully, however, agree with you in questioning the taste, and feelings of such people.

I can easily conceive (replied Mr. Willis,) that virtue may reside in a busy scene, where duty calls. But I cannot easily suppose, that a virtuous mind would enter willingly into a crowd, if it might repose itself in the stillness of a quiet life. I have often admired that beautiful picture of patriarchal innocence and simplicity, in the history of Isaac. It is given in few words; but it fully opens his character.—Nobody can read, that *Isaac went out to meditate in the fields at even-tide*,* without conceiving him to be a man strongly impressed with a sense *of piety and devotion.*

It is a passage (said Sir Charles,) which I too

* Gen. xxiv—63

have always admired.—But still I think this love for retirement depends much on the mind itself. Some minds, which we may yet suppose to be virtuous, cannot perhaps exist out of a crowd.—They are unlettered; have no resources in themselves, and want a bustle to put them in motion.

So thinks the felon, (said Mr. Willis,) when he is conducted to a solitary cell.—He conceives his own company the worst he can possibly have.—But, as his thoughts have nothing abroad to employ them, they must find employment at home: and, if any thing can bring him to reflection, these hours of solitude will do it.—Now I should suppose, that such *virtuous spirits*, as want *a bustle to put them in motion*, call loudly for the remedy of a little solitude to make them think; and that the stillness of the country is as much adapted to their case, as the solitary cell is to that of the felon.*

Suppose, (replied Sir Charles,) you should recommend a cloister to such moral invalids?

* ——————Wisdom there, and truth
Not shy as in the world,—and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.

Why, there are diseases of the mind, (said Mr. Willis,) for which I should suppose a cloister no improper remedy.—Though I have no great veneration for any of the institutions of popery, yet I know not whether a little confinement to a hermitage might not, now and then, be of use. These total sequestrations, however, I shall prescribe only for disorders of the more incorrigible kind, and as temporary expedients. The solitude of the country, which is a more lenient remedy, I should hope, if properly administered, would, in most cases, have its effect.

I could wish you, however, (said Sir Charles,) to consider, whether, if you stop the disorder in one part, it may not break out in another.—Perhaps, the solitary hours you recommend may nourish some humours, which might not have appeared under a different treatment.—Prejudices of various kinds—sourness—moroseness—an ill opinion of mankind, and an overweaning opinion of our own perfections, might shew themselves perhaps where they had never shewn themselves before.—The pebbles of the beach are worn smooth by collision; while the solitary flint is angular, and rough.

In many cases, (said Mr. Willis,) this may

happen.—My remedy no more undertakes to make a man perfect, than the prescription of a physician to make him immortal. We both do our best; and all I can say, is, that if a man make a right use of his contemplative, and solitary hours, he takes the best means, that I know, to cure the maladies of his mind.

But I am not so clear, (replied Sir Charles) as you seem to be, that virtue and solitude are thus nearly united. Unless the mind be well furnished, though it may not contract humours, it may be apt to mope, and muse upon trifles. It should have some pursuit.

And can it be without a pursuit, (said Mr. Willis,) in the Country? That vast field may certainly furnish employment, in various ways, for minds of every cast.—The studious man, (from the Philosopher to the Poet,) courts its solitude, as the muse of thought, and reflection; and the religious man finds it agreeable to all his pious soliloquies, and meditations.—In general, I consider the calm still hour as the atmosphere of virtue.—Here it breathes its vital air; and it seems to me so congenial to thought, that, if a man have few resources in himself, or should even be vacant of a theme, the very

beauties of nature, which are ever at hand, will furnish abundant matter. Nature is an endless fund of amusement; and through the beneficence of our indulgent creator, almost every man has a mind suited to some of its charms. Almost every country likewise produces some beautiful variety peculiar to itself. It is either in the neighbourhood of a winding river, or of a rocky scene; or of a spreading lake; or an arm of the sea.—Or, perhaps, the country may be mountainous, with numerous little irriguous vallies interspersed.—Or it may be an extensive vale, winding into the obscurity of distance.—Or, perhaps, it may be in the neighbourhood of a forest, whose woods, and lawns, are a continued treat to the eye.—Or, perhaps, on some upland down, from whence the whole country around lies open in prospect; while the season of the year, or the hour of the day, gives new variety to each scene, by representing it under different lights, and different colours.*

* Nature the morning spreads o'er eastern hills,
Earth glitters with the drops the night distills:
The sun, obedient at her call, appears
To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears.

Indeed, I believe (said sir Charles) there are few people, who do not feel themselves interested in these views of nature; and if such amusements will not make men innocent, they will, at least, keep them so. They are congenial, certainly, to a state of innocence. I shall always remember the sensations of this kind, in a very amiable man, who once honoured me with the name of friend. He was a very popular lawyer, and his knowledge, judgment, and unimpeached integrity, brought him into a very enlarged field of practice. You have heard me often speak of the disagreeable affair I inherited from my father. To the great abilities of this worthy gentleman, who was my prime counsellor, I owe my being liberated from a labyrinth of difficul-

Banks cloth'd with flowers, groves fill'd with sprightly sounds,
The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds,
From the blue rim, where skies, and mountains meet,
Down to the very turf beneath thy feet,
All speak one language, all, with one sweet voice,
Cry, to her universal realm, Rejoice.
'Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream,
That heaven's intentions are not what they seem;
That only shadows are dispers'd below,
And *earth has no reality——but woe.*

ties, in which I could foresee nothing but endless perplexity. I admired his acuteness, and yet noble candour so much at that time, that it was my pride to cultivate a friendship with him ever afterwards; and I cannot now recollect him without a tribute of gratitude. But I called him up, at this time, on another occasion. His business tied him close to London; where he scarce ever breathed any air, but that of his chambers, or Westminster hall. He had often been solicited to accept a seat among the twelve judges, which he long declined; but, at length, finding his business make larger demands upon him, than his health would allow, he accepted the offer, and was made one of the judges of the Court of King's Bench; though, he assured me, he gave up half his income by his promotion. He now took a house in the country, where he spent his leisure. I happened to be much with him, during the first spring in which he occupied it. He was a man of no cultivated taste in landscape: all his feelings were those of pure nature; but I shall never forget his almost raptures at every rural sight, and every rural sound. You will not wonder at my flights, he would sometimes say, when you consider, that it is now

above twenty years since I have seen even the budding of a tree.*

But still (continued sir Charles) these beauties of nature, however gratifying to the taste of some men, are no food to others—and only slight aliment to many, who must have something more solid to feed on.

You are toohasty with me: (said Mr. Willis) you expect an edifice, while I am only collecting materials. Besides, you will give me leave to remind you, that the question does not so much lead me to furnish solid employment for the mind; as to substitute the natural and innocent amusements of the country, in the room of the fascinating and debauching amusements of the town. And, in this light, the beauties of nature, merely as amusements, are highly valuable. There may be eyes, which cannot see them; I believe there are: and many view the beauties of nature only as the means of furnishing them with the illiberal amusements of hunting, or shooting. These however are not my pupils. To the generality of mankind, the beauties

* All these circumstances were nearly true of the late amiable, and excellent Sir Joseph Yates.

of nature are certainly among the most natural, the most innocent, and the most soothing, which the Almighty has given us. You remember how strongly your friend Horace speaks of a love for nature—how he graces *his columns with trees*—and tells you, that if *you could even force nature out of the mind with a fork, yet, through some cranny she would insinuate herself again.**

Indeed, if the mind be well ordered, we cannot enjoy the scenes of nature, without grateful hearts to that bounteous benefactor, who smooths our passage through the troubles of life with so many pleasing circumstances. If the admirer of such scenes have a love for the arts also, the pleasure is doubled.—By comparing the works of nature with the rules of his art, he sees many new beauties, which common eyes cannot see; and this *increase* of one of the most innocent of our pleasures, to those who are capable of receiving it, is *surely* a very valuable acquisition. The works of nature, however, furnish many employments to the mind, more solid than looking at a prospect. What a noble

*——Inter varias nutritur sylva columnas
Laudaturque domus longos quæ prospicit agros.
Naturam expelles furca, tamen usque recurret.

study do they afford in a scientific view! What a range do they exhibit from the heavens above, to the earth beneath! What a glorious subject of contemplation are the heavenly bodies! The sun, in all its lustre;—and, at night, the moon and starry heavens!

For myself, (said sir Charles) I never could be enchanted, as many people are, with the study of astronomy. My ideas are more prone. The *os sublime*, which, according to Ovid,* and Tully,† was given us to examine the stars, I am much more inclined to fix on the surface of the earth. The sun, indeed, I gaze at with awful reverence, as an object both of beauty, and use. When I see him rising in his majesty—and, like a great artist, turning the blank canvas of Nature into a series of the most enchanting landscapes; tinting them with exquisite colouring, and throwing over them the most delicate masses of light and shade—while the sky, also, touched by his radiant pencil, unites

* Pronaque cum spectant animalia cætera terram,
Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
Jussit, et erectos ad sydera tollere vultus. *Mat.* 1.

† Primum eos humo excitatos, celsos, et erectos constituit ut Deorum cognitionem, cœlum intuentes capere possent. *De nat. Dei. l.* 2.

in harmony with the woods and plains.——Or, when I see him darting his genial warmth into the bosom of the earth, and calling forth the productions of Nature from their wintry prison —when I see the flowers, at his touch, open into all their beautiful forms and colours, and scent the air with a profusion of fragrance—When I see the russet earth transformed, at his approach, into a field of corn, or a verdant pasture; and the leafless forest into a tufted grove—I admire, without measure, this amazing instrument of omnipotence; and can almost pardon the ignorant heathen for worshipping this wonderful luminary as a God.—I admire the moon, also, throwing her silver ray obscurely over the surfaces of things; and doubt not, but she has her useful influence, also, both at land and at sea; though most of her operations, I think, in both these scenes of action, are rather hypothetical. But as to the *starry heavens*, I can hardly guess either at their nature, or use. I go to the philosopher, and he tells me many wonderful stories of their magnitude, and distance; in which there may be some truth, and probably much conjecture. I survey them with astonishment; but I consider them only as the

wonders of other systems. They decorate ours merely *by the way*. A gnat, or a beetle, which I understand better, is more the object of my attention; and, of course, a stronger argument to me of the Almighty power, than they are in all their vastness and magnificence.

I think, (said Mr. Willis) you do not pay the *starry heavens* the respect, that is their due.—In the first place, the philosopher, I think demonstrates somewhat more than you all are willing to concede. But suppose he did not, and we knew nothing more of the starry heavens, than that wonderful appearance, which they make in a clear night; yet still I think them objects, not only of great respect, but of great utility. In all the works of God, there is something beyond human comprehension, which seems intended to teach us, at the same time, the omnipotence of God, and the weakness of man. It is thus in religion. We are enabled to go a certain length—that is, as far as is necessary: but to pry into any of its mysteries, is forbidden.—And as it is in religion, so it is in the works of nature. Much we are able to comprehend, but much more is incomprehensible. If we could comprehend all the works of God,

our minds, like the great Creator's, must be infinite. If the ocean could be fathomed, our ideas of its grandeur would in a degree subside. God might have hid the stars from us, by interposing a medium of grosser air around them, or by various other means: but he suffers them to shine, and us to gaze; that we may have such ideas of omnipotence, as we could not have if we saw nothing, but what we understood.*

Let us however, if you chuse it, leave the stars, and descend to earth. Its various tribes of animal, and vegetable life afford scope enough for meditation. Or, if we like it better, we may dive into the mineral world, and there find amazing objects of curiosity. The Country, is a never-ending store-house. In the Town, the works of man are displayed; in the country the

* ——————— The stars, and planetary balls,
With cloudless lustre burn; not ranged in heaven,
With mere design a twinkling aid to yield
To the late-wandering stranger; nor ordained
To rule our destinies, as craft averred,
And ancient ignorance believed.—Thy power,
Parent of all, they speak: they tell of worlds
Innumerable, warmed by other suns,
And peopled with innumerable hosts
Of beings.———————

works of God—how wonderful beyond all investigation! Take any walk of nature—pursue it as far as you can, and you will find how little you have advanced.—Newton, in his time, was a prodigy: but what discoveries have been made in the heavens, since his day? In the properties of air, what wonderful knowledge has been lately attained? And what a variety of new objects have been brought before us by our late circumnavigators?

Nay, (said sir Charles) when you carry us into the South-Seas, you fairly desert the Country. I can easily conceive, that a man may read Spencer, or Milton, or Thompson, more pleasantly by the side of a river—or under the shade of a tree: but I should think a book of voyages, or travels, might be read as well in London, as any where else.

I beg pardon, (said Mr. Willis) I have been carried from the question, and it was needless, as my subject wants no digression. Such works of God, as our own neighbourhood affords, without going to the South-Seas, are enough to engage all our attention; and make the Country a scene of great delight, and improvement.—Nay if we confine ourselves only to one class: it is

more than enough. Suppose, for instance, we just run over a few of the wonderful circumstances to be found in *animal life*. In the *form* of animals, what amazing variety do we observe, and what *endless gradation* from the sprightly hrose, which bounds over the plain, to the inanimate limpet, which is fixed to a rock!—— The cloathing of all these various tribes is as wonderful. It consists either of skin—or fur—or feathers—or scales—or shells. But how wonderfully are all these modes of cloathing varied; and many of them how beautiful?—If we consider the *notes*, and *cries* of animals, which is their language, our ears will be as much delighted in one case, as our eyes are in the other. All these sounds, even the roughest of them, are a kind of musical instruments, which, when the mind is in unison with them, are highly amusing.

Aye, (said sir Charles) these natural concerts are often more gratifying to me, than any artificial music. The notes of a thrush, or a blackbird, have often raised my spirits to a pitch, which the notes of Handel or Corelli could not have done.—I mean not to depreciate artificial music: I think it a noble art. But the

music of nature is, in general, more congenial to my feelings. It is aided, no doubt, in a good measure, by its appendages. A serene sky—a gentle air—and a beautiful country, are certainly more pleasing accompaniments to grateful sounds, than a crowded opera-house, and night-illuminations. Nay, there are seasons when nature's roughest strains, as you just observed, may be melodious. You will laugh at me, perhaps, if I say, that I have sometimes taken delight even in the croaking *of a pond* of frogs.

Laugh at you, (said Mr. Willis) I should rather join with you in praising that beneficient Creator, who hath furnished our various humours with so many means of gratifying them. That beautiful connection, which subsists among all his works; and which often ties them together by the nicest threads, is wonderful. Such is the connection between the various passions of the human mind, and the different modes of beauty, and melody, in nature.

And yet, (said sir Charles) we must allow, that the same effect is often produced by artificial music. Need I suggest to you the analogy between the human passions, and musical sounds, so beautifully described in Dryden's ode to St. Cecelia?

No, No, (replied Mr. Willis) without such a commentator as Dryden, I am ready to own, that *artificial music* has its effect. But I would observe two things. First, I should suppose, that before you can be affected by it, you have *a lesson to learn.* Your ear must be practised in artificial sounds: and must be able to distinguish, and yet unite the several parts of each composition. I much doubt, whether the finest piece of music would make its way through an unpractised ear. But in a child of nature the sounds of nature vibrate untaught upon his soul. ——Secondly, I much doubt, whether artificial music can at all find so ready a way to the soul, as natural sounds. It lingers about the ear; and though it may sometimes, no doubt, make its way to the heart, yet, in general, I believe, it stops at the vestible.*

Whereas nature's sounds, through some imperceptible channel, generally find a way to the

* Love makes the music of the blest above;
Heaven's harmony is universal love;
And earthly sounds, tho' sweet, and well combined,
And lenient as soft opiates to the mind,—
Leave vice, and folly unsubdu'd behind.—

Still stricter were the opinions of Plato, and Lycurgus, who would not allow soft music in their commonwealths.

heart. Whether she entertain us, with an air among rustling leaves,—or a blast in the forest—or she sweep the billows of the ocean—or animate the concert of the grove—or play a bold solo on some rushing cascade, varying its notes as the gale approaches, and recedes—still there is something which strongly affects the soul, that is in unison with it; and raises raptures, and flights of enthusiasm, I believe, far beyond the power of any artificial sounds. I once had an intention to compose the history of *natural music*. I should have taken in the whole compass of nature—animate, and inanimate. The two elements of air, and water, are the only instruments of music that belong to inanimate nature. Of fire we make no musical use, except as it furnishes the grand, and awful notes of thunder. The element of earth has no place in a musical scale; though some speak of the hollow sounds, which mountains emit.

But if the musical powers of inanimate nature are few, and confined, we have ample amends from the extended scale of notes in animal life. The fish indeed is mute, and the reptile has little musical power.—But the beast, the bird, and the winged insect, are all harmonious.

After I had thus gotten my instruments together, I should next have considered the powers of each. Thus, for instance, the musical powers of water are wonderfully great.—The prophet Ezekiel describing the harmony of heavenly voices, can find nothing so apt to compare it to, as the *sound of many waters.* And St. John, struck with the beauty of the idea, makes the same comparison two or three times. From the melodious trickling of the stream, as it slides down the rock, and falls among the pebbles below, to the stunning sound of the cataract, what a variety of notes intervene?—These incidents, and others that occur in the river, give it a very extended gamut. The sea is as much varied, as the river; from the gentle swell which just breaks with faint murmur upon the beach, to the tremendous roar of the ocean-wave bursting in all its violence, and foam against the fractured side of some rocky promontory.——The music of the air too is equally varied—from the whisper among the trees, while the blast rises, swells, and dies away, to the furious storm which shakes, and agitates the oaks of the forest.—In this way I should have considered the powers of all the other musical instruments of nature.

I should then have discriminated their various modes of harmony; and shewn their effects on the different dispositions of the human mind.

I think indeed, (said sir Charles) it is a pleasing subject. The illustration of the works of nature is, in every shape, amusing. But if you had persevered in your plan, you would perhaps have been at a loss for terms. You could not have adapted those of artificial music; and without appropiate terms, I know not how you could have discriminated the infinite variety of notes, which would have poured in upon you.

By raising a difficulty so seriously, my dear sir; (said Mr. Willis smiling) you speak as if you thought me in earnest.—All I meant to say, was, what you have said for me, that the subject would be an amusing one.—But I never thought twice about it. The difficulty you mention, and a thousand others, particularly my want of leisure, my want of skill in music, and of the knowledge of nature, would have deterred me.

To say the truth, (said sir Charles,) I thought it too vast a scheme for the leisure of a man of your clerical engagements. At the same time, I know you are so great a lover of

nature, that I did not think a small difficulty would have deterred you. By the way, do you recollect nothing pleasing on this subject in the poems of Ossian? Whether authentic, or fictitious, I think they are well founded on the manners of the age in which they are supposed to be written; and abound with such beautiful images, drawn from the sounds of nature, as you would expect in those distant times, before artificial music was cultivated.—I marked several of these passages with my pencil; and, if I do not forget, will turn to them, when we meet next in the library. —I was much pleased with some of them.— But, among the musicians of nature, I hoped you would have dwelt largely on that little elegant musician, the bee.—It is one of my great favourites. The laurustine bower, at the bottom of the south walk, draws together, in the early spring, such swarms of these little industrious musicians, that I have sometimes sat listening to their hum above me, longer than I should care to tell. Anthony was with me there the other day, and the little fellow puzzled me by asking me, what they made all that noise for?

It was a deep question, (said Mr. Willis;) and would have puzzled either Buffon or

Linnæus.—You are generally pretty ready.—What solution did you give to your little philosopher's inquiry?

I told him, (replied sir Charles,) that God had given most of his creatures some kind of language to express their happiness, or misery; and that these little insects were rejoicing over the kind provision, which God had made for them; they might be considered, therefore, I told him, as singing a hymn of praise to God.—It is not, however, only the honey-bee (continued sir Charles) but all the tribe of winged insects, that I consider as sweet little minstrels. Those merry rogues, which I often find in knots, singing in the shade, and dancing to their own music, and threading each other in a thousand mazy forms, are my delight. I am fond also of the large blue fly, which comes bounding in at your window, and taking two or three turns round the room, blowing his horn, like some important post,—tells you it is a delightful sunshiny day, and bounds out again to enjoy it.

But it is not only our eyes, and ears, that are charmed by nature; (said Mr. Willis;) our minds are opened.—We trace every where the wisdom, contrivance, and power, of the great Creator. What variety of food has he provided

for his Creatures! and what various ways has he taught them to procure it! We admire also the free frugality, if I may so express it, and the exact œconomy, which pervades every part; and which should always be a most instructive lesson. Nothing is lost. The very leaves, which first fed the beetle, and the caterpillar, drop upon the ground, and become winter habitations for the smaller reptiles. After this service, they mingle with the earth, from whence they sprang, and give back that nutriment, they had received. Thus beautifully does nature comment, as it were, on our Saviour's speech to his disciples, after the miracle of the loaves, and fishes, "*gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing may be lost.*"—How wonderful again are the arts of each animal in taking its prey; or in escaping from it; its different modes of offence, and defence, and its different retreats for shelter, and the production of its young! Then again, how wonderful is the equilibrium, which is kept up among animals —how numerous are the defenceless tribes, that are destined for prey, in comparison of those, that prey upon them! What, again, shall we say to that gentleness of nature, and those peculiar

qualities which render some animals particularly useful to mankind! Human art, I doubt not, could tame a lion, or a tyger: it has been done: but no art could subjugate the species. Whereas, the horse, the dog, the cow, the sheep, and various other animals, are managed with ease. Why has not the tyger the docility of the dog? they are both beasts of prey;—no reason can be given, but that the divine Creator hath furnished them with different instincts, according to the different purposes for which he intended them. The docility of the horse is wonderful. In whatever business he is employed, war, agriculture, journeying, or draught, he learns his trade with as much ease as his master. I remember seeing a troop of horse grazing in a meadow, when a thunder-storm came on; the horses, no doubt, conceiving the engagement was begun, immediately drew up in rank and file, as orderly as if they had been under the direction of their officers. And I have heard, that horses, which had been used to hunting, would clear every fence to get at a pack of hounds within their hearing.

The attachment, too, of the horse to his master, (said sir Charles) like that of the dog,

and some other animals, is often strange and unaccountable. I am acquainted with an old Gentleman, between seventy and eighty, who rides a vicious horse, and rides him in any pace, with great safety. He throws the rein upon his neck; or he beats him for misbehaviour. The horse neither takes advantage nor offence. But if the groom, or one of his master's sons, who are brisk young men, should mount him, he certainly, if excited to the least quickness of motion, runs away with him. I remember riding out with one of the young gentlemen, who was mounted on this horse. From a gentle pace, in which we were riding, the beast began to increase his motion; and soon, in spite of a strong curb, struck into a gallop. The young man could not check him, but was carried off in full career. A tide-river, of considerable dimensions, lay before him—the horse plunged into it, in spite of all the efforts to prevent him, and swam to the other side. Even that exertion scarce cooled his mettle; and when we met again, at the bridge above, the horse was ready, without the greatest care, to start off a second time.

Aye, (said Mr. Willis) the attachments, the docility, and instincts of animals, are wonderful;

and furnish us with invincible arguments of the Creator's wisdom and power; and yet we see but very little of his works. What an amazing display of wisdom would be revealed to us, if we could trace them through the whole animal world! The very history of the elephant alone would furnish a volume of curious facts. We know him only in his domesticated state, in which he exhibits such wonderful instances of acuteness—of friendship to man—of honesty, and intrepidity—that, if we could have, what we never can have, a detail of his native manners in the wild forests, where he acts at large, it would present us with more wonderful anecdotes, than, perhaps, any other part of natural history. But we know little of his social attachments—of the laws that govern him in society—of the language in which he communicates his ideas—of his hostilities, and modes of defence—of his haunts, retreats, and all the other circumstances of his private life.

But, my dear Sir, (said sir Charles) I must again call you to order.—You carried us, a few minutes ago, into the south seas,—and now you take us into the wild forests of the east; whereas, it was agreed between us, that we have sufficient employment for all our curiosity at home.

I beg pardon, (said Mr. Willis) but it is difficult to travel through a beautiful country, branching into so many roads, without deviating a little, now and then, from the direct one, to gaze about at the scenery around us. The road of nature, in all its varieties, is wonderfully alluring. I shall, however, recover my path, and endeavour to keep from straying again. I shall mention, therefore, only one creature more. It is said to be produced in our own climate, and is, I think, more wonderful than any, that can be found either in the south seas, or in the forests of the east——and that is, *an Atheist.*

To tell you the truth (replied sir Charles) I can hardly suppose, that such an animal exists. How can any person have faith to believe, that all the wonderful things of this world were made by chance—and yet stagger at so plain, and easy a proposition, as that they must be made by some intelligent being?—as if a man should pretend to say, he did not believe the ocean was fluid, when he sees it fluctuating in every direction before his eyes. I have often, indeed, (continued sir Charles) thought the atheist's creed, (for *he*, too, has his creed) one of the most wonderful things in nature. The old Epicurean

atheist was certainly a very absurd fellow, for conceiving that the world, and all its appendages, could be jumbled together by falling atoms; though he could neither tell from whence those atoms fell—what made them fall—nor how they could complete their work by falling. Yet, considering the lights that have been thrown upon the works of nature, since his day, the modern atheist is ten times more absurd.

Well, (said Mr. Willis) let us leave these gentry to their own philosophy—and let us just pause a moment, to reflect, how great, beyond all conception, must be the power, and wisdom of God, in contriving, framing, and sustaining the vast fabric of nature, and all its appendages—whether we examine, with our telescopes, the immensity of the heavens above---or, with our microscopes, the minuteness of some of the creatures below! What history of man can be equal to this history of the works of God! What philosophy can be so interesting! What study can be equal to it, in opening and enlarging the mind; and giving it grand, and awful conceptions of the Creator,—of his power, his wisdom, and goodness---those great articles of our belief, which should incline us to a perfect obe-

dience, and impress upon us, that great religious principle,---that a desire to please our beneficent Creator should be the grand motive of all our actions? Other religious uses, also, we draw from contemplating the works of God; particularly various analogies, corresponding with the truths of religion; and, indeed, as the same God is the author both of nature, and of religion, the analogy serves, I think, not only to *illustrate* the religion, but, in a degree, to *confirm the truth* of it. This analogical method was taught us by our blessed Saviour, whose beautiful allusions are chiefly confined to the productions of nature. They are all simple and unadorned, like the books which contain them; but all highly explanatory of the truths, they were intended to convey. How beautifully is his affectionate care for his friends illustrated by a hen gathering her brood under her wings—his close connection with his disciples by a vine, whose branches are fruitles, unless they continue in the parent-stock. The different soils, on which seed is sown, furnish him with an illustration of the different modes of receiving the gospel. God's providence is shewn, from the care he extends to the fowls of the air; and the

lilies of the field are brought to shew the folly of our solicitude for costly apparel. Under such an example, we look among the works of creation; and trace, with pleasure, the many beautiful allusions, and analogies, which are blended among them. From these we may instruct ourselves, in many very serious truths. The elements are continually instructing us. When the thunder rolls among the mountains, or the tempest shakes the forest, we see the terrific majesty of God. When the day is serene, and nature is pushing out, on every side, its rich vegetation, we have the emblem of a great beneficent benefactor. One scene impresses awe—the other, love. When we see how luxuriantly plants grow in soils, that are adapted to them, we see the well-disposed mind receiving religious truths—and producing its proper fruit; while the sterile soil, where nothing vegetates, is an emblem of those unhappy people, on whom no instruction can take effect. The natural growth of weeds, self-sown, and their flourishing state, point out the nature of all vicious habits; while the necessity of cultivating useful plants, shews the use of religious education. Again, the instincts of animals, obeying in all

the offices of life, the will of their great Creator, are a lesson to man, who has such superior powers intrusted to him.

We may consider the world, therefore, (said sir Charles) as a great *pictured book*, if I may use the expression. It contains a thousand emblems of truth delineated before us, from which, as we look at the pictures, we are to pick out the moral, and instruct ourselves.

It is very true (said Mr. Willis;) and we can hardly turn over a page of this pictured book, that will not teach us some useful lesson. Indeed, I have no doubt, but it was intended, by our great Creator, as a book of instruction. There are some great truths, however, which it more exactly points out; and which, as very important, it repeats in various pages, and under different pictures; particularly that great truth, that the death of man will not end his being. In the wane of the year, we see nature die away; but, at the approach of spring, it recovers with fresh beauty. The same truth is represented under the different changes, which some of the insect tribes undergo. They die in their crysolis state—but are restored in a superior one. The sowing and springing of seeds represent this

great truth still more strongly: they are buried in the ground and die; but there is a principle of life within them, which rises again. Indeed, corn, in all the operations it undergoes, from its being sown, weeded, cut down, and brought to the winnowing-fan, is an epitome of the most material circumstances of human life, from the birth of man to the last judgment: and in this light it is used in scripture, particularly by St. Paul. These, and many other pleasing allusions, with which various parts of the country abound, make it surely a scene of great improvement to a reflecting mind.

I have often amused myself, (said sir Charles) with hunting after these allusions.—You caught me, the other day, contemplating an ant-hill. I never see a shower of falling leaves without thinking of an epidemical disease. And I have many a time stood over the brook at the bottom of the park, and considered the course of human life in the stream, sometimes bustling around the little opposing projections of the bank; and then perhaps gliding gently along.

But we shall suffer these beautiful analogies, (said Mr. Willis) to carry us too far. The country has other subjects for our meditation.

Among its advantages, I think, we may consider a less expensive mode of living.—A man may be expensive any where: but I speak of the sober œconomy of a regular family, which lives much within itself; and therefore much cheaper, than a family which is constantly obliged to live from the produce of a high-priced market. The country cuts off also the expense of the London-house—the charges of living frequently on the road—and the expensive engagements, and amusements of a town life.—Men naturally require amusements. Whether the mind is intent on study, business, or labour, still it requires some relaxation. In the town these amusements are commonly *found for us*; and we are made to pay for them. In the country, we generally *find them for ourselves*; and have them for *nothing*. If therefore a man can be as well amused (as by habit he certainly may) by seeking out amusements in the country, as by following the expensive, and often inflaming amusements of the town, he not only stands a better chance to preserve the innocence, and simplicity of his character, but he keeps his money in his pocket for better purposes.

To all this, (said sir Charles) I can with great

alacrity subscribe. While I lived in London, though my income was the same it is now, and I had then no family to maintain, and had no peculiar expenses on my hand, I was always necessitous—my banker was continually overdrawn—and though I could not bear to be in debt, yet I was sufficiently satisfied, if I could barely keep out of it. Now, though I think I do not live below my rank in life, yet I live considerably within my income. And though I do not attribute this merely to a country life, for I am certainly a better œconomist than I was, yet I am persuaded, that if I had kept my London-house, I should have been, at this time, in difficulties. It is impossible for any one, who has not tried it, to conceive the many advantages, pleasures, and conveniences, which a man finds from living within his income—unless he spoil all by rigourously hoarding up whatever he saves. If however he save with moderation, according to the exigences of his family, and still keep his hands at liberty for the purposes of generosity, and charity, he will feel more happiness, than extravagance gives him, with all the pleasurable scenes it can produce.

You remind me of a story, (said Mr. Willis)

which I heard the other day, of a rich old gentleman, who perhaps carried the matter of œconomy somewhat too far: however, as he acted on the best principles, his little parsimonious foibles should be forgotten. A worthy man, formerly well acquainted with him, but reduced to a low ebb of fortune by an unhappy partnership, paid him a visit. It was one of those humble visits, which, without open solicitation, plainly enough suggests its meaning. He was carried into a little room, where his rich friend commonly sat, whom he found in the act of chiding, with some warmth, a servant for wasting a bit of candle, and displaying the many uses, which that bit of candle might have served.—Ah! (said the poor suitor to himself) this is not the house where I can expect relief. His friend however desired him to sit down, and asked him many questions about former times, and his present circumstances. But still nothing being said to the purpose, the poor man, with a hopeless heart, took his leave. As he went out, the old gentleman, putting into his hand a bank-note of five hundred pounds, said, "If this "will not rid you of your difficulties, let me "hear from you again."

I would give all the money in my pocket, (said sir Charles) for the momentary feelings of the old gentleman at that instant. Let him save his inch of candle if he please. I will call it virtue. If his parsimony had been less rigid, he might have left perhaps many a bounteous deed undone, which his noble heart suggested.—Without frugality, all the beneficent virtues languish.

Aye, (said Mr. Willis) frugality, no doubt, is the reservoir which feeds them. Without the supply which *it* furnishes, they are like the barren wishes, mentioned by the apostle, *Be thou warmed, and filled*, when nothing else is done for the poor necessitous petitioner. I shall not however enter into a definition of the terms, *parsimony*, *frugality*, and *œconomy*, (though it might be curious) nor endeavour to point out the circumstances to which each belongs. An honest conscience is the best casuist. One thing however I must add: we spoke, just now, of living in the country as a matter of *advantage*. I think it may be considered also as a matter of *justice*. The prudent farmer restores the manure to the land that produced it. The land indeed has a claim upon him, though a silent one, for

this act of restitution. Just such a claim have the tenants, and labourers of the country gentleman, through whose means his fortune has been acquired. He ought certainly to spend that fortune among them. It is so far a gentleman's misfortune, when his business engages him to spend part of his year in London. But, when he is under no such necessity, the country is certainly the place, where he ought always to be found.

I perfectly agree with you, (said sir Charles) it has always given me high offence to see gentlemen drain their tenants, to make a splendid show in London. It is *unfeeling vanity*; and that kind of ostentation, which often covers indigence.———There is one advantage more, (continued sir Charles, after a short pause) which the country possesses over the town, and which you have not yet mentioned; and that is the more healthy employments it furnishes for the laborious part of mankind. While the town labourer, closely pent up, is sweating at a forge, a still house, or a brewery; the country labourer is working in the field, or in the garden, uniting health and labour together. I speak only in general terms; for there may be some

employments in the country, which are pernicious; and others in the town, which may be the reverse.

The bulk of our labourers however, (said Mr. Willis) are certainly more healthfully employed in the country than in the town: and this is an advantage, which I thank you for suggesting: it did not occur to me. And I think I may particularly add, that the life, and employment of a country gentleman is perhaps the most enviable of any other. The man in office has his time more taken up with its functions, than a wise man would wish, if he could help it. The same may be said of the professional man, and the man of business. But the country-gentleman has his time entirely at his own disposal; and need only resolve on the fittest, and best employment of it. He is the centre of a large circle of servants, tenants, and labouring poor; who all look up to him; and to whom he has the glorious privilege of making himself an example, and a blessing. His private hours, in the mean time, may be directed to the most rational studies; and his hours of amusement to the most pleasing objects; among which the improvement, and the embellishment of his estate, is not one of the least.—

—It will still, I think, improve our argument, if we add, as a farther advantage to the country, the general healthiness, which free air, and exercise, unconnected with employment, give all its inhabitants. The town is, more or less, a large hospital, full of maladies of various kinds. Indeed, in a course of years, the whole would be one vast cemetery, if it were not for the supplies it receives from the country. Compare the bills of mortality in London with the register of almost any parish in England, and you will see this truth confirmed. You will see numerous immature deaths in the former; and as many living into extreme old age in the latter. In children especially the difference is very great.

Here Mr. Willis making a pause, Sir Charles desired him, if the argument was at an end, to draw the heads of it together, as he had often heard him do in his pulpit discourses. He would be glad, he said, to see how the whole appeared in one point of view.

You have imposed, (replied Mr. Willis) a difficult task upon me; as our conversation has been a very desultory one. However I will gratify you, as far as my memory serves.

We allowed, I think, that the capital abounds

with various modes of instruction, and rational objects of pursuit. But we must grant also, that it is the receptacle of vice; and the scene of debauching amusement. Men, therefore, of established character, and of confirmed habits of virtue, may often find their time usefully employed in London, while they judiciously make such objects only their pursuit, as London alone can furnish. Many people also are obliged, by their different occupations, to live in London; and business, it may be hoped, will be a check upon pleasure.—But to the unexperienced youth, especially to the young man of fashion, and fortune, who has no particular employment for his time, London is a most dangerous scene; and whoever has to do with his education, will try every art to keep him from its ruinous temptations. The advantages, which are to be reaped from London, he has neither the means to procure; nor the taste to enjoy. Its vicious pleasures, which meet his inclinations, are generally his only pursuit. At the same time, as he must be amused, some modes of innocent amusement must be sought for him: and among these none perhaps will answer the end better, than *domestic travel*.—

It is not however only to the *unexperienced youth*, that the capital is a scene of danger: the man even of *confirmed habits of virtue* must guard against its allurements. If he loiter in it, he will run the risk of dissipation. Frivolous company is always at hand. It will be difficult for him to avoid a connection with it: and it will by degrees infallibly lead him into much waste of time at least—and a participation of its insipidity. His thoughts will be always abroad. It is not easy for a man to converse with himself in a crowd. A thousand ideas are continually floating in his mind, and interrupting serious reflection. By degrees he begins to hang loose to all his old sober maxims, and opinions—perhaps he contracts others, which are mischievous—in politics perhaps—perhaps in religion, from an intercourse with the world—and in short, loses too often the candid, open, pleasing simplicity of his nature.—Whereas, in the country, every thing contributes to rouse him to reflection, and to a proper use of his intellectual powers. The noise, and bustle of the town are removed: the quietness, and stillness of the country assist meditation. The works of God are continually before him. They

fill his mind with ideas of the divine power—his heart with subjects for devotion:—he gathers instruction from various analogies; and has a thousand lessons *visibly*, as it were, delineated before him.—In the country too he is enabled to live more frugally, and more usefully: and from the nature of his employments, and indeed from the very air he breathes, he procures health, and exercise together.—The result, then, from the whole is this: if London afford more opportunities to some of improving the *mind*—the country, in general, is more adapted to improve the *heart*. In the former, a man can hardly avoid being led aside, more or less, by its delusions—in the latter, he may indeed get wrong: but it must be through the pravity of his own heart, which every thing around him has a tendency to correct.

The two gentlemen having thus brought their subject to a conclusion, talked about indifferent matters, as they rambled through the park towards the house, where they found Lady Bennet, and her sister waiting for them at the tea-table and the two eldest children, sitting quietly at supper, without speaking or teazing any body. Children may either be among the most pleasing,

or the most tormenting parts of a family. But the whole economy of this family was rational, and of course pleasing. Their evenings (when they all met, after the several pursuits of the day) were delightful. From tea, they had no interruption till bed-time. As they dined late, no regular supper was introduced. A few slices of cold meat, or a little fruit, was set upon a side-table, of which any person, who chose it, might partake. Cards were never seen in the house; nor their evening-table filled with the apparatus of bottles, and glasses. This effectually excluded all such visitors as disliked an evening without cards, and drinking.—Rid of all these incumbrances, their evenings were spent in the most agreeable manner among themselves; or with a very few neighbours, whose ideas united with theirs. In summer, they would often walk into the park, to hear the evening-thrush, or the nightingale; or to shew the children the lambs, and the fawns, taking their little frolicksome excursions among the trees.—When they did not walk, they never wanted resources within doors. Sometimes, they would divide the night with a little music. But generally—in winter especially—they sat round

a table; and while one of the gentlemen read out for the entertainment of the company, the rest were employed in some useful, or ingenious work.

When Mr. Willis went home, he took sir Charles by the hand, as they walked through the hall, and said he should not do justice to the subject they had discussed, if he did not add, that the country only could furnish such an evening as they had just spent. You never spent such an evening in Cavendish Square.

A DIALOGUE

ON DUELLING.

A Dialogue on Duelling.

As sir Charles and his friend, were sitting on a bench, one evening, in an elevated part of a wood, which closed upon them behind, and left all the front open to a beautiful prospect, they were joined by Baron Brett, as he was commonly called—a gentleman much esteemed in the country; and with whom they were on terms of the freest communication. Mr. Brett had served with great reputation in the Swedish army; and had received from the king a title of honour, which is more respected in Sweden, than in England. For that reason therefore, and because his estate was but moderate, he chose, like a sensible man, to decline the honour, and take the title of colonel only, which he had borne in the Swedish army. He was a man rather

serious in his disposition;—had read much, and conversed more;—was perfectly well-bred, and what was commonly called, a man of strict honour.

On his sitting down with the two gentlemen, he asked them, if they had seen the papers that morning?—As they had not, he gave them a few particulars of foreign news; and among domestic articles, mentioned a singular duel, which had just been fought. As they had not heard of it, the colonel related the circumstances.

A grave gentleman was standing by a coffee-house fire, and calling a waiter, gave him his snuff-box, which he bad him fill. As the waiter returned, a flippant young officer, in one of the boxes, called out, My good lad, let me take toll as you go past. On which he thrust his finger, and thumb into the box, and served himself.—The gentleman, on receiving his box, opened it carelessly, and throwing the contents into the fire, bad the waiter fill it again. The young officer (Ingram, I think, his name was) considering this as a gross affront, inquired who the gentleman was; and finding his name was Forbes, he sent him a challenge. Forbes told him, he had no inclination to fight on so trifling an occa-

sion—that he meant him no insult—but that he owned, he felt himself rather hurt by such a piece of intrusive familiarity from a perfect stranger.—Nothing however would satisfy Ingram; and his behaviour was so insulting, that Forbes, at length, thought himself under a necessity to meet him. They fired together. Forbes's ball took place; and Ingram fell dead on the spot.

This story introduced a conversation on duelling. Mr. Willis observed, he had heard of duels, on very ridiculous occasions; but he never before heard of two lives staked on any thing so trifling, as a pinch of snuff.

No doubt, (said the Colonel) the occasion of the quarrel was trifling enough; and I should have thought the affair might easily have been made up by the intervention of friends.—However in these cases, the *occasion* is only the *spark:* it is the *point of honour,* which blows up the flame.

Mr. Willis desired the Colonel to inform him, what he meant by the point of honour?

Why perhaps, (said the Colonel) it may not be easy to make the point of honour a visible point to a gentleman of your profession; but we soldiers see it like the disk of the sun.

You do not mean, I suppose, (replied Mr. Willis) that the soldier should hold any motive of action, which religion will not warrant ?

No, no; (said the Colonel) I mean only that gentlemen of your profession may not always see things in the same light, in which we soldiers see them.

I understand you then to mean, (answered Mr. Willis) that duelling may be maintained on christian principles, when they are rightly understood.

Why, yes, (said the Colonel) that is what I mean.—I understand, that all divines allow war to be lawful; and I see not why duelling may not be defended on the same ground. Wars often, like duels, may be very unjustifiable. All I wish to say, is, that the same principle guides both; and on that principle either may be right, or wrong.

I do not see that, (said Mr. Willis.) It appears to me, that war, and duelling are maintained on very opposite principles. The breast of the gallant soldier glows with true honour. He draws his sword without animosity to any one; and could take to his heart the man he strikes.* His

* A general officer, in our service, General Stevens, informed the author, of a noble instance of this kind, which

affections are all public.—The breast of the duellist, on the other hand, is a dark gloomy chamber, full of deadly hate, malice, and revenge.—Then, again, how different is the cause in which they fight? The public cause, it is true, may either be right, or wrong; but of that the soldier is no judge. His *country is his cause.* For *it* he ventures his life freely, and bleeds in its defence. His country alone draws his sword;—his country alone sheaths it. The duellist's cause, is some trifling affront, which a wise man would despise; and a good man forgive. Do you see no difference, my dear Sir, whether a man act on a public, or a private affection?—Whether he act on the broad basis of general good; or in the narrow orbit of some little malignant passion?

I am far from depreciating the merit of the gallant soldier (said the Colonel;) but I hope a man may fight a duel with a better heart than you insinuate.

he had from one of his own aids-de-camp. This officer, who was present at the affair of Helder-point, in the August of the year 1799, said, he had observed several of the British soldiers, during the action, giving the wounded enemy a share of their own little pittance of liquor, from their canteens.

I see not how. (replied Mr. Willis,) You allow he has received an injury;—the soldier has received none. What is the common effect of receiving an injury? On christian principles you forgive it, and there is an end; but in the mind of the duellist, as it is not forgiven, it works like poison—corrodes every sentiment—turns it into black venom—and extinguishes, so far as I can see, every spark of benevolence. Here and there a gallant spirit may fight, without being actuated by revenge—but in all questions of numbers, we must go upon averages. I believe you will hardly deny, that hate and revenge are the usual motives, which draw the duellist's sword; and that these are very unchristian sensations.

I grant, indeed, (said the Colonel) that the duellist's quarrel is often grounded on those principles, which, no doubt, are unchristian: but I should hope, in general, the man of honour has better principles. Indeed, my dear Sir, a soldier's honour is a nicer matter than you are willing to allow—and his provocations may be more complicated. Who can bear the imputation of cowardice,—the disgrace which it must fasten upon him;—and often, perhaps, the contempt

of the whole corps in which he serves. I have heard of some poor gentlemen, who have been treated so contemptuously by their brother officers, on a suspicion of their behaving with less honour than they ought, on occasions of this kind, that they have been obliged to relinquish their profession. You must allow such a case to be a very hard one.

Why yes, (said Mr. Willis) it is a hard case; and it is still a harder case, when a man, for conscience sake, suffers martyrdom. Religion sometimes places us in these hard cases. But you are waving the question, my dear Sir. We are not talking about the hardships of the case, but about its connection with religion. If you give up its connection with religion, I shall readily allow the hardship of the case; and yet I should wish you to consider, that it is no more than the soldier daily undergoes: whatever your leader puts upon you, however harsh, or disagreeable the service, still you obey. You march up to the battery;—you enter the breach;—and does it not, my dear Sir, sound oddly, to say, you would do more for the commanding officer, than you would do for God Almighty? Has not God Almighty, think you, the same

right to put his servants upon hardships, which a commanding officer has? And is it not highly wrong, that you should murmur and hold back in one case, more than in the other? However, to answer your *case of hardships* more in point, you have supposed a case, which I think is hardly supportable. You represent a religious conscientious man, engaged in the disagreeable circumstances of a duel. Now, such a man can hardly be supposed to fall into these circumstances; he will avoid all these little petulances, and imprudences, which he knows will lead to a dispute. He will particularly avoid intoxication, and play, from which most quarrels arise. I dare take upon me to say, Colonel, that you not only never fought a duel yourself, but were never in any difficulty of that kind.

But still, (said the Colonel) however fortunate I may have been, the most peaceable man may sometimes get into these difficulties.

At any rate, then, (replied Mr. Willis) he must avoid fighting, if he act on christian principles. The duellist must undoubtedly run into the crime of murder, on one hand, or suicide on the other; nay, in fact, he is guilty of both *I will obey God, rather than man*, was the decision of a person who did not want cou-

rage on every proper occasion.—Yet still I aver it, a man of a respectable character may avoid a dispute if he please.—If he find himself wrong, he will not scruple to make a handsome apology; and, if he think his antagonist so, he will endeavour to bring the matter, by the intervention of friends, to some amicable composition. And if his opponent, after all, will not listen to reason, he must be some low dirty poltroon, whose insults all the gentlemen of the corps will be ready to resist.

Besides, (said sir Charles, interposing) there are many ingenious ways of getting out of difficulties of this kind, when more direct means fail. I have heard a story of a general officer in our service, which pleased me much. On receiving a challenge, he went to the challenger, and told him he supposed they were to fight on equal terms; but as things now stand, said he, the terms are very unequal. I have a wife and five children, who have nothing to subsist on but my appointments: you have a considerable fortune, and no family:—to place us, therefore, on an equality, I desire you will go with me to a conveyancer, and settle upon my wife and children, if I should fall, the value of my ap-

pointments. When you have signed such a conveyance, if you insist upon it, I will then fight you. The deliberate manner in which the general said this, and the apparent justice of the requisition, made his antagonist reflect a little, on the idea of leaving a wife and five children to beggary: and as the affair could not well stand reflection, it went off.

Your story, (said the Colonel) reminds me of an old sea-captain, who, on being challenged, told his antagonist he had had fighting enough in his time, and was now quite weary of it. But, said he, if you are determined to fight, we must each take hold of the corner of a handkerchief, and so fire hand to hand. I cannot now fight in any other way: for I am an old man: my hand shakes; and if I do not get close up to my adversary, I may miss him.—This tremendous way of fighting, pronounced in a deep, hoarse voice, brought on a short conference, which ended in peace.

I have read some where, (said sir Charles) a similar story of the brave Dutch admiral, Van Tromp; he was a large heavy man—and was challenged by a thin active French officer. We are not upon equal terms with rapiers, said Van Tromp; but, call on me to-morrow morning,

and we will adjust the affair better. When the Frenchman called, he found the Dutch admiral bestriding a barrel of gun-powder: there is room enough for you, said Van Tromp, at the other end of the barrel; sit down, there is a match; and, as you were the challenger, give fire. The Frenchman was a little thunder-struck at this terrible mode of fighting; but as the Dutch admiral told him he would fight in no other way, terms of accommodation ensued.

As you have each told your story (said Mr. Willis) I hope you will allow me to tell mine. An officer, distinguished for his courage, received a challenge, which he threw aside without troubling his head about it; the next morning he took his walk in the park, as usual—where his antagonist, coming up to him, said, he had received no answer to his note. How should you, said the officer, I never troubled my head either about you, or your note. But, said the challenger, did you say the free things of me, which I was told you had said? Say them, said the officer, aye! and I shall say them again; every body says them. Sir, replied the officer, I demand satisfaction.—I have none to give you,

replied the officer;—you must seek it from your own conscience. Then, said the challenger, you are a confounded coward—and dashed his hand in his face. Very well, returned the officer, coolly, we'll settle this matter, my friend, by and by—and continued his walk. The other expecting a challenge, on this insult, was served with a writ of prosecution, in the Court of King's Bench. The lord chief-justice took up the matter with a very high hand:—great damages were given; and such sureties for the offender's good behaviour demanded, as the poor gentleman was not able to procure; so he was thrown into Newgate. When he had lain there about a month, the officer informed him, that if he would beg his pardon publicly in the park, where the insult had been committed, he would remit the damages, and endeavour to procure his enlargement. The poor man was sullen at first, and restive; but in another month his stomach came down, and he accepted the offer.

If the officer had not been a man of known courage, (said the Colonel) he could not have transacted an affair of honour in that mercantile manner.

I think he might, (replied Mr. Willis;) it

would have been a noble instance of his courage, to act conformably to his duty, in defiance of the world. But I wish, my dear Sir, you would suffer me again to beg, you would favour us with a definition of the point of honour; it may open some important duty, and give the argument a new turn.

We soldiers (said the Colonel) don't deal much in logic: I could give you a definition, but I fear you would contrive to entangle me in it, like the old Ratiarius; and then cut me down, without suffering me to use my weapon.—In short, the point of honour is to be felt rather than explained; like an innate sense, or taste, it is above definition.

As I have not that extreme reverence for it, my dear Sir, (said Mr. Willis) which you have, I will endeavour, if you will give me leave, to explain it for you; don't start if I resolve it into rank cowardice.* I am as great an advo-

* Perhaps at last close scrutiny may shew
The practice dastardly, and mean, and low——
That men engage in it, compell'd by force,
And *fear*, not *courage*, is its proper source.—
The fear of tyrant custom, and the fear
Lest fops should censure us, and fools should sneer.

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cate for courage as you are;—and as great an enemy to cowardice: I would have a man afraid of nothing but of offending his maker. But now, your hero is afraid of the world. Call him by what honourable title you please, he certainly acts through the *fear* of what the world will say of him; and his motive is certainly cowardice at the bottom. Now, own candidly, my dear Sir, that my hero is the braver man: he is no more afraid of death than yours. Shew him an act of duty, with death standing behind it, and he rushes on; but, till he have the commission of his great master, a threatening world cannot move him—he holds it at defiance. It is the fear of the world, depend upon it, call it courage, or honour, or what you please, that is the source of duelling. It is the same fear that makes men deists, and leads them into a variety of wicked conduct. He is the true man of honour, who keeps steadily in the path of virtue, and braves the laugh of the world.

I know not what to say to these things, (said the Colonel) I may as well withdraw. I find nothing I can say can obtain any quarter for us men of honour. To be serious, however, though a man may, in a transport of passion, be

guilty of a rash action, I must honestly own, that, in cold blood, I do not think I could bring myself to draw the trigger of my pistol against the breast of any man. I believe, if I were in those circumstances, I should suffer my antagonist to fire at me, if he chose it; and I should then discharge my pistol in the air. Does that please you?

I cannot say it does: (replied Mr. Willis) your offering yourself to death, unless in the line of duty, appears to me to have very much the colour of suicide. Your life is not your own: it was given you for valuable purposes. You call him a spendthrift, who squanders his estate in folly and extravagance; what name, then, would you give to him, who squanders a possession of ten times greater value?

I do not mean to squander it (replied the Colonel;) I risk it in defence of my character, which is dearer to me than my life.

You are now, I suppose (said Mr. Willis) taking upon you to defend the challenger. You have given up, I presume, the part of the person challenged?—But consider, my dear Colonel, whether the method you take of vindicating your character be an effectual one. If the im-

putation be true, surely the less you stir in it the better; the world will the sooner forget it. But if it be false, I see not how fighting can vindicate you.

I conceive the matter (replied the Colonel) in this light: my character has been aspersed; in order, therefore, to set the world right, I pawn my life on the veracity of what I aver. The world cannot suppose I would venture such a stake on a lie.

But, my dear sir, (said Mr. Willis) the world will suppose it, and has often supposed it with great truth. I dare say you remember a recent fact, which is exactly in point, The case of sir Nathan Ridgway—though I believe you were in Sweden at that time. However, sir Nathan was accused of embezzling his sister's fortune. He fought a duel in defence of his character, and died nobly in the cause of truth. But it unluckily fell out, after his death, that the embezzlement was twice as great as the world had supposed it before. In fact, I apprehend the case, of many of these vindicators of their characters, is much the same as that of a thief going to be hanged, who will often, at the very foot of the gallows, deny the fact which has been most

convincingly proved.—I beg pardon for treating the man of honour with so much disrespect, but I am persuaded the comparison does him no injustice. The thief denies the fact, in hope of a reprieve;—the man of honour fights, to make the world believe, what he knows to be a lye.

My dear Colonel (said sir Charles) how can you, who have no guilty spot in your own character to defend, be an advocate for those, who take a mode of defence, which I am sure you would not take, if your own character was attacked. If an injured man can *say* any thing in his own defence, the world will listen to reason, and argument; but, can a pistol-bullet be an arbiter in this case? You laugh at the gothic institutions of our ancestors in their ordeal trials:—you see the folly of making a poor woman attest her innocence by walking barefoot, and blindfold, among burning ploughshares. But tell me honestly, my dear sir, if it do not sound as oddly to rest the merits of a cause on the chance of a shot? You, and I, are magistrates; what would people say, if a matter of right and wrong were brought before us, and we should declare, that truly, we thought the best way of deciding it, would be to draw lots?

Come, come, sir Charles, (said the Colonel) be merciful. It is not within any law of arms for two to fall thus furiously upon one. I entered the lists only with my friend Willis. And, though hard put to it to parry his thrusts, I must now defend myself against another antagonist, who comes armed, cap à pie, against me. I might without any loss of honour retreat before you. I will however have one brush more with you both, before I quit the field.——Suppose then we enlarge our question, and taking a wider circuit, see how the point of honour affects the general good of mankind. In the first place, gentlemen, consider that species of government which we call an army. It is upheld by the point of honour. Take away that vital spring, and the whole will languish.

You throw aside, then, (said Mr. Willis) my definiton of the point of honour. True honour, or the fear of doing any thing base, or unworthy, is a noble principle, not only in an army, but in every other species of government: while false honour, or the fear of the world, I conceive to be a degrading principle in all situations. However, to take the matter up in the light in which you place it, I should suppose, that, if

the point of honour, as you conceive it, were the vital principle of an army, it should, like all other principles, pervade the whole. But so far from that, the mass of the army is not in the least actuated by it. What all know your rank and file of the point of honour? No more than they do of transubstantiation. And yet we allow them to be brave fellows, and full of military spirit. Nay, what is more, our yeomen and peasantry, who make up the body of our gallant troops, know as little of the point of honour, as the several corps, into which they inlist. If, then, the mass of an army can maintain its military spirit without this point of honour, whatever it is, I hold it to be equally nugatory among their leaders.

I beg your pardon, (replied the Colonel;) the troops are animated with it as strongly in their way as their leaders. They do not indeed maintain it with sword, and pistol; but they discover it as effectually with their cudgel sticks, and fists.

Well, then, Colonel, (said Mr. Willis) to shew you how accommodating I am, I will meet you half way, and allow you this mode of maintaining the point of honour. Keep your swords in their scabbards, and, if the law makes no objec-

tion, you have my free leave to silence an impudent fellow by giving him a bloody nose.*

The colonel smiled, and told Mr. Willis he had an excellent knack at answering an argument with a jest. However, added he, I will try you on another ground. The world, you must acknowledge, is full of ill-manners. You are insulted at every corner of the street; at least you would be, if there were not something to keep the tongues of licentious people in awe. These petty offences, though insufferable, cannot be brought into a court of justice. To preserve good manners, therefore, and decorum among gentlemen, it seems to me, that nothing can be so effectual as the point of honour, which, resenting every impropriety of behaviour, keeps them at that respectful distance from each other, which good manners requires.

Why, yes, (said Mr. Willis) if a man is to be run through the body for speaking a wry word, I suppose it will make him rather

* Were I impowered to regulate the lists,
They should encounter with well-loaded fists:
A Trojan combat would be something new,
Let Dares beat Entellus black and blue.

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cautious. But, whether the offence given, and the remedy applied, are well adapted to each other, is another question. We began our dispute, you remember, colonel, with your asserting, that the laws of honour are very consistent with the precepts of christianity. But can you conceive, that the acutest casuistry can bring the bloody law you have just been expounding, into the most distant resemblance of a precept, which commands us *not to avenge ourselves, but to give place unto wrath*—to *feed an enemy, if he hunger*, and *give him drink, if he thirst*.—These, and numberless other rules, are given us to promote peace and happiness among men.

But we see, (said the Colonel) that they do not promote peace, and happiness among men. We see, that if it were not for the statute-book, the laws of christianity, would have little effect: and therefore we are obliged to fortify the the laws of christianity, by our political institutions. Now we consider the law of honour in that light. It is meant to strengthen, and fortify the precepts of christianity; and to *preserve* that peace, which they *dictate*. The man of honour, therefore, may be considered as a magistrate acting under the gospel.

You are not surely serious, my dear sir, (replied Mr. Willis) in this high encomium on the magistracy of duelling. We fortify the precepts of christianity, it is true, by human laws. But it is always supposed, that the divine and human law look the same way. Adultery, and theft, are forbidden by christianity, and punished in our courts of justice. But, does this sanction us in making a law, or establishing a practice, directly opposite to the precepts of christianity, in blowing a man's brains out, merely for speaking a wry word?—Besides, how strange is it to talk of maintaining peace, by fomenting quarrels? Our Saviour says, *I come not to send peace on earth, but a sword.* I shall soon expect to hear that expression alledged as a licence for duelling; though it was expressly used to characterize and brand that opposition, which he foresaw these unchristian practices would make to the gospel.——To settle the dispute between us, continued Mr. Willis, in the fairest light, the best way, as it appears to me, is to consider the tendency of the different principles we hold; and see what their effect would be, both on society, and on individuals, if carried into extensive practice. To try the virtue of any prin-

ciple we must give it its full scope, and carry it as far as it will go.—Suppose then the law of honor prevailed generally—that is, that every man revenged the injuries he met with, (I will allow in their due proportion) what would be the consequence? Would not the whole world be a scene of injury—retaliation—and injury again, without end? Can you conceive any thing more horrid, and dismal?—Whereas, if the mild, and peaceable doctrines of the gospel should prevail, the world universally would be changed into a scene of happiness, and repose, beyond conception.* The greatest miseries that befall mankind, arise from man himself. All these would be removed, and no distresses left, but such as unavoidably accompanied mortality. Nation would unite with nation, and man with man, in bonds of fellowship, and love. The man of honor says, you *provoke* injury by *forgiving* it. I should only wish to ask the man of honor, whether he ever made the experiment?

* This argument is well managed by Soame Jenyns, in his *View of the internal evidence of Christianity*; (p. 57) where the great advantages of the mild, and peaceable dictates of the gospel, over the irascible passions, is fully shewn.

I am afraid, colonel, (said sir Charles,) you have undertaken a cause, which cannot be defended. You have also a sturdy opponent to deal with. This good man (laying his hand on Mr. Willis's shoulder) is skillful at his weapons. He wrested my sword very fairly, some years ago, out of my hand; and I am wicked enough, for my own credit's sake, to rejoice when I see him gain an advantage over others. But now, suppose, colonel, we take the cause in question into a lower court of judicature, than that of Christianity. Suppose we carry it before an heathen tribunal. I should be glad to know, whether you find any traces of duelling among the Greeks, and Romans? I am not indeed deeply read in ancient history; but I do not recollect one instance of a duel recorded by any of my classical friends.

Why, Sir, said the Colonel, the ancient Greeks were gross fellows. They had none of the delicate feelings, and polished manners of gentlemen. Homer, who gives us, I suppose, an exact picture of ancient Greece, tells us what *black-guards*, (if I may use the expression) his heroes were; and what foul offensive language they commonly used.—As far too as any anec-

dotes of quarrels in the later times of Greece, and Rome have come down to us, I believe the same coarse mode of repressing injury may be traced.

Only with this difference, (replied sir Charles) that as the age polished, the mode of reproof polished with it. The cutting irony—the sarcastic sneer—the biting repartee—the sly insinuation—or, where necessary, the valid argument—with other modes of refined reproof, became the weapons of offence.—And what does all this prove, but that, according to the dictates of truth, every man should repel an injury with those weapons, with which he had been assaulted. If a man attack you with his tongue, with your tongue defend yourself. If, like an assassin, he draw his sword upon you, draw your's in your own defence.—Now the old Roman knew all this system of injury, and reproof perfectly well; and how to adjust the one to the other. It remained for the Christian to invert this order, and draw his rapier against the sting of a wasp.

I met lately, in a history of Greenland, (said Mr. Willis,) a mode of deciding quarrels, which pleased me much; and, I dare say, it will

please you, sir Charles, as it is very agreeable to the sentiments, you have just been recommending. The honest Greenlanders seldom quarrel: but when any offence has been given, or taken, they never meddle with swords and pistols. The duellists challenge each other before proper judges, to a kind of satyrical contest. The challenger begins, and opens the ground of his complaint in a sort of comical doggerel verse; for the Greenlanders are represented to be people of humour. The adversary then defends himself in the same kind of doggerel. Rejoinders are sometimes made. Sentence is then passed; and he who has had least to say for himself, begs pardon. The duellists then shake hands; and the day generally ends in some kind of merriment.

Excellent! (said sir Charles) If poor Ingram, who gave occasion to this conversation, had acted with the wisdom of a Greenlander, all had been well. He was certainly guilty of a petty breach of good manners, by thrusting his finger and thumb into a gentleman's snuff box, without his leave. It was not an offensive *expression* indeed, but an offensive *action*, which comes to the same thing: and the Scotch gentleman

reproved it very *neatly*, as I suppose an old Roman or perhaps a Greenlander, would have done by *another action*. Ingram should have made a slight apology which, no doubt, would have been well taken. But the foolish fellow chose to introduce his sword into the business; and his life paid the forfeit of his folly.

There is an excellent story, much in point, told of the late general Oglethorpe. When a very young officer, he was at table, in Germany, with one of the Princes of Wirtemberg. As they were drinking after dinner, the Prince jocosely dipped his finger in a glass of wine, and filliped it into Oglethorpe's face. Oglethorpe did not at first know how to take it; but on a moment's recollection, he said, your highness has passed a very good jest; but we do it much better in England, and then threw a full glass of wine into the Prince's face. The Prince was startled a little at first, but before he had time to speak, come, come, said an old general officer who was present.—It is all well, your highness began first.

But pray, (said the Colonel) how would you have advised Mr. Forbes to have acted in this business? As to Ingram, I entirely give up his

cause: but I see not how Forbes, pushed as he was, could have acted otherwise than he did.

I think (replied sir Charles) the story Mr. Willis hath just told us, of the gentleman, who complained to the Court of King's Bench, points out a very proper line of conduct. Am I to risk my life at the desire of any insolent fellow, who wishes to fire a pistol at me?

But he gives you a blow, (said the Colonel.)

Aye, let him, if he dare, (replied sir Charles;) and I shall request the Lord Chief Justice to give him another: and we will see, who strikes hardest.—Depend upon it, colonel, a few such examples, from men of character, would make these fiery sparks a little more careful of meddling with gun-powder: and would contribute more than any thing else, to teach them better manners, and rid society of such pests.

I can however, (said Mr. Willis) help the colonel to one duel in Roman times, which will at least shew the idea the Romans had of this species of fighting. In Cæsar's camp, at that time besieged, two officers quarrelled. I forget the ground of their animosity; but I believe one had called the other a coward. Let the army, said the affronted officer, judge between us; and

bidding his antagonist follow him, leaped down from the rampart among a party of the enemy. The other followed; and they fought like lions. One being overpowered, the other ran to his relief; and kept the enemy at bay, till they were both relieved, and got safe to the camp—where they shook hands—went merrily to their mess—talked over their duel—and were ever afterwards good friends. I know not whether I tell the story exactly right; I have not read it, I believe, since I left school.

You have given us, however, (said sir Charles) the outline of it, which is all we want.—You may add also, if you please, on the subject, that the Romans could not place duelling in a more contemptible light, than by making it, as they did, the business only of slaves. A school of gladiators would certainly throw the same stigma on duelling at Rome, which intoxicating their slaves did upon drunkenness at Sparta. And yet we, of this polished age, and polished country, consider this barbarous practice as gentlemanly!

But you will remember (said the Colonel) that knights, senators, and even emperors did not disdain to draw their swords in a gladiatorian school.

I remember it well (replied sir Charles;) and I remember also, with what high panegyric they are handed down by historians, for their prize-fighting, charioteering, and other noble feats of that kind. Degrading, however, as their practice of duelling was, it was certainly superior to the duels of our days. They had not the rancour of savages in their breast: they were only ridiculous fellows, and fought for fame.

After all (said the Colonel) I see not what advantage you get by a comparison with the Greeks and Romans. Their revenge often led them to assassination—which, I doubt not, you will consider as a worse crime than duelling.

I do not mean (replied sir Charles) to enter into a defence of the virtue of the Greeks, and Romans. But you will observe one thing, that poisoning, and stabbing were always considered as deeds of darkness:—they durst not face the day. Whereas, we are talking of a crime, that stalks in open day-light;—that assumes an honourable name;—that is defended—that is even ranked in a catalogue of virtues; and tends of course, to corrupt the manners of the public. It is on this I chiefly lay my finger. The christian *vindicates* a crime, of which the

heathen was *ashamed.*—Besides, many moralists consider duelling, in itself, as a crime very little, if at all removed from the guilt of assassination.*

The Colonel not making an immediate reply, sir Charles went on.—As it seems very plain, therefore, that duelling is neither of christian, nor of classical origin, I will endeavour to shew you, as well as I can, from what noble origin it did spring.—When the trumpet of the holy wars sounded over Europe, and inspired its inhabitants, from one end to the other, with a frantic zeal for war, nothing was heard, or seen but what had a military cast. The air, the dress, the language, the amusements of men, were all martial. Then, first the tournament came in use. It was intended as the great school for the Saracen expedition—a kind of drill to train the armies of Europe. Its laws were established,

* Take away the circumstance of the duellist's exposing his own life, and it becomes assassination. Add this circumstance, and what difference does it make? None but this, that fewer, perhaps, will imitate the example; and human life will be somewhat more safe, when it cannot be attacked without equal danger to the aggressor's own.

PALEY, Vol. I. p. 274.

and it became a legal institution. But, as I have heard, that in the noble diversion of cock-fighting, besides the *main*, as they call it, there are many *bye-battles* allowed; so, in the noble institution of the tournament, many private quarrels were introduced, and decided under the sanction of the lists. The thing, though not legal, was winked at for the honour of arms; till at length it rose to such a height, that it was forbidden by law, as early, if I remember right, as Cœur de lion's time. But though forbidden, it could not be repressed. The whole nation was then mad; and, in this instance, continues so. For though duelling is still forbidden by law, it is still practised. Thus, you see from what a gothic stock it originally sprang; it ought, indeed, long ago to have been ashamed of its ancestry, and to have hidden its head.

I have heard (said Mr. Willis) that duelling and throwing at cocks, came into England at the same time; but I am not solicitous to ascertain its birth and parentage. All I am solicitous about, is to shew, that it is no way related to christianity. On this head, the honest confession of a young gentleman pleased me more, than all I ever heard said in defence of duelling.

He had been educated under a religious father; but not making a proper use of the advantages he had received, he launched out into the fashionable vices of the age; and though he was not of a quarrelsome disposition, yet, in one of his frolics, he got into a fray, which ended in a duel. His father, shocked at this thing, expostulated with him, for having acted in defiance of the laws both of God, and man. The young gentleman honestly replied; Sir, I know that duelling is a breach of the christian law; and that it is, of course, a wicked action. But what would the world say of me, if I, who have certainly not been a correct observer of the precepts of christianity, on other occasions, should, in this single instance, have sheltered myself behind its authority.*

The Colonel making no reply, sir Charles, looking at his watch, said he was afraid they should, make the tea-table wait. He got up, therefore, and taking the Colonel by one arm, in a jocular way, desired Mr. Willis to hold him by the other; and they would take him into custody, and de-

* This is a fact; and the author of these papers was acquainted both with father and son.

liver him over, as a disturber of the public peace, to the ladies, who should pass sentence upon him.

The Colonel begged, and prayed, they would not treat him with so much severity; and said, he would promise any thing to be set at liberty; provided they would not whisper it abroad, that he had given up the noble cause of duelling.

INSTRUCTIONS

TO

A YOUNG MAN

INTENDED

FOR HOLY ORDERS.

Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt. Simplex enim illa, et aperta virtus in obscuram, et solertem scientiam versa est; docemurque disputare, non vivere. SEN. Epis. 95.

Instructions to a Young Man, &c.

Dr. Wilson, bishop of the Isle of Man, was a person of great benevolence. His purse, as far as it went, and his friendship in giving advice, were often of great use to his neighbours. Few men had a sounder judgment;—were freer from prejudices;—were more disinterested, or more sincere. So that in consulting him, you were generally sure of the best advice—always of the best, that was in his power to give.

Where the borders of Lancashire join the county of York, lived a gentleman of the name of Langton—a man of virtue, sense, letters, and fortune. The bishop and he had been educated together at school, and at college—had continued their intimacy at both places; and

still retained it as they advanced in life. Their different situations allowed them but little intercourse; yet, as often as they could, they contrived to meet. When the bishop had business in London, he generally landed at some port on the Lancashire coast; and spent a week or two on his journey with his friend Mr. Langton. And Mr. Langton, though he disliked the sea, passed now and then over to the island.—Their visits were commonly mere visits of friendship: but, in the year 1749, Mr. Langton paid the bishop a visit to consult him on an affair of consequence; which he took an early opportunity to open.

I am well satisfied, said he, my dear sir, with the disposal of my son James. I have sent him to the temple, to get such a knowledge of the law, as may be useful to him hereafter in managing his own affairs. It is the fashion, it seems, to give an eldest son this mode of education; and I have followed the fashion; though, for myself, I doubt much whether the risk be not commonly greater than the benefit. I should certainly however have taken some other mode of bringing my son forward in life, if I had not had the peculiar advantage of placing

him in chambers near his uncle, for whom I know he has a great respect.—So far, however all is well. But now my next difficulty is, what to do with Edward.

I thought, (said the Bishop) he had determined for the church; and that you had acquiesced in the determination. He entered at Sydney, I think, the year before I was last in England; and must now be ready for his degree.

I hope he is, (replied Mr. Langton.) He is at least of standing to take it next february.

The Bishop then asked, if the young man had changed his mind?

By no means, (said Mr. Langton;) it is I who have my doubts. He is of a gentle spirit; and I know will follow any course, which I shall prescribe, and therefore I am the more solicitous to prescribe the best. But I will lay the case before you;—and consult you on two questions; first, whether you think it adviseable to make him a clergyman at all?—And, secondly, if you do think it adviseable, what course of study I shall put him upon? For, to tell you the truth, I think Cambridge more adapted to form a mathematician, than a theologian. All the atten-

tion of the place is given to the one; while the other must find out assistance as he can.

The Bishop thought, indeed, that the attention and honours of the university ran somewhat too much in one course. But, as young men, he said, were sent to the university with a view to various modes of life, which were not immediately determined, it was necessary, that their earlier years should be employed in a more general course of study. When they take their first degree, it is supposed their course of life is determined; and that each student should then turn his mind to that study, which he means to pursue. But till that time, I know no course of study, which is so universally applicable to all others, as mathematics. I should wish, indeed, every young academician, in some degree, to be a mathematician. To get a habit of carrying demonstration along with us, in all our inquiries, or, at least, as strong proof as can be had, is friendly to truth; and mathematics, or whatever else strengthens the mind in judging of such propositions as come before it, should eagerly be encouraged.—However, this is not a time to discuss these matters. Be so good as tell me, what your reasons are for hesitating about Edward's

going into orders? I always thought him a remarkably good lad.

He is, (said Mr. Langton) but to speak impartially, I do not think him a young man of ability and learning enough, to shine as a clergyman.

Before I answer you, (said the Bishop) I must know what idea you affix to the word *shine*.—If you expect your son to be able to answer Myddleton*—or seat himself with dignity in a professor's chair, you may be right perhaps in not wishing him to take orders. But, if you will be satisfied with his being a useful minister of the gospel, I see nothing yet to prevent it.

Most parents, (said Mr. Langton) have a wish to see their children make a respectable figure in life; and I suppose it was owing to some floating idea of that kind, that I used the word *shine*. But in earnest, I desire nothing more, than that my son should be, as you say, a useful minister of the gospel: and if he is that, in my opinion, he *will shine*.

And why may he not? (replied the Bishop.) Though his parts may not be brilliant, he wants

* Dr. Myddleton had about this time attracted the attention of the public by his *Inquiry into the miraculous Powers of the Church*.

neither good sense, nor good judgment; and if his disposition be such as you represent, and such, indeed, I always thought it, I see not what should prevent his making a respectable figure in the church.

We do not yet entirely, (said Mr. Langton) get into each other's meaning. My acquaintance with the clergy has chiefly been with men of a high form in literature—men, to whom the Greek and Hebrew languages were almost as familiar as their own; and I have always conceived, that these languages, with other parts of literature, which appertain to the clerical profession, were absolutely necessary to the accomplishment of a clergyman. Now I very much fear, that Edward's capacity is not equal to all this. He is a tolerable Greek and Latin scholar; and yet far from being a critical master of either language. Of the Hebrew he knows nothing. Nor do I think he has that retentive memory, and vigour of understanding, which can penetrate deeply into any of the more recluse parts of learning.

And what does that shew more, (answered the Bishop) than the wonderful direction of providence in all these things?—In St. Paul's time

there were *diversities of gifts, but the same spirit.* And so it is now. If there are some members of the church, who can defend its tenets against infidelity, and enthusiasm, it is equally necessary there should be others of different talents, who can diffuse, and preserve religion through the different parts of the community. And though the prejudices of man may consider the former in a higher light, the providence of God, no doubt, considers all the pastors of the church, who do their duty faithfully, as fellow workers, and of equal value—the multitude of smaller veins, which diffuse the blood through every part of the body, are surely as useful as the larger, which carry a fuller, though not so diffusive, a stream.

But is there not a danger, my dear sir, (said Mr. Langton) when a man cannot attain the height he wishes, and which, indeed, most men naturally wish, that, like Horace's bad poet,

Si paulum summo discessit, vergit ad imum?

As he finds his ambition to get on, either in clerical knowledge, or in the performance of his duty, is not seconded by the powers of his mind, he sinks in the pursuit; he deserts him-

self; and does not do what he otherwise might have done.

No doubt, (answered the Bishop,) there may be some danger in this; as there is likewise, that the man of higher parts, and attainments, should become proud, pedantic, supercilious, and over-bearing. There are extremes in all human things, towards which we continually verge. But it is not a high station, or a low one, great endowments of mind, or moderate, that mislead us. It is the want of that balance of mind, which is regulated by religious principles, and a good disposition; and which, I think, we have every reason to believe your son possesses.

You think, then, on the whole, (said Mr. Langton,) that Edward has a capacity to attain such learning, and such acquirements, as may make him a useful member of the church?

I certainly think so, (replied the Bishop:) for though I have a great respect for learning, and learned men, and men of abilities, yet I should not wish to have all the clergy of England of that corps. A *certain degree of learning* is necessary to all, who instruct others. We see what miserable work the itinerant preacher often makes, who is unfurnished with knowledge of

every kind. At the same time I should not suppose, that the learned doctor is, *in general*, much better qualified for his profession. The one preaches arrant nonsense—the other such learned sense, as few of his hearers can understand. I will not take upon me to say, that great parts, and great learning, disqualify a man for being a good pastor. I have known several, who have attained the art of letting themselves down to the capacities of low people. But it is not very common: a man cannot easily get it into his head, that such ideas, as are familiar to himself, should not also be familiar to others.—In conversation, as well as preaching, the man of moderate parts and learning more easily enters into the ideas, and cases, and scruples of his parishioners; and can more easily adapt his exhortation, or his reproof, to each particular exigence, than the learned clerk, who has always been accustomed to think in syllogism, and express himself in the most precise, and appropriate terms. I remember myself to have heard a learned minister give a lecture on some impropriety of behaviour to one of his parishioners, which I thought, at the time, the poor fellow could not understand. Two days after I met him in the fields, and had the curiosity to ask him

whether he understood what the doctor had said to him? Yes, he answered, he understood most of it very well—it was to keep his stockings gartered. I could not conceive what the poor man meant: but, on recollecting, I remembered, that the doctor had illustrated some impropriety in his behaviour, by the slovenliness of ungartered stockings. This was the only thing the man understood; and of course the only thing he remembered.

Why, you encourage me highly, my dear sir, (said Mr. Langton.) I humbly wished to know, whether I might make my son a clergyman; and you prove to me, that he may not only make a good clergyman, but the best of clergymen.

It is very true, (replied the Bishop) and I have something still farther to say. The clergyman of great parts, and great learning, is generally an abstracted man. He has some art or science always in his head, besides his profession. He is a critic; or a mathematician; or a chymist; or an antiquarian; or something or other, which runs away with his thoughts. You will always however understand, I make exceptions. I have, in my life, known mathematicians, and critics, who have had parochial

cures, and have discharged them well; while they consider their favourite study only as an amusement. All I mean therefore is, that, generally speaking, the bias in these cases is towards the *amusement*, which of course takes the lead, and leaves the second place only for the *employment*. Thus, for instance, if a clergyman be given to field-sports, it is a great chance if they do not, now and then, elbow out his business. Whereas he, whose bias towards the amusement is not so strong, has a better chance of giving a preference to the employment.

Well, then, (said Mr. Langton) it is determined, that if Edward himself make no objection, I shall make none for him. As far as *worldly matters* are concerned, I should certainly wish him to be a clergyman. I can in no other way do so well for him. In a course of time the living of ———— may be vacant: indeed, I fear, from the worthy incumbent's infirmities, much sooner than Edward can be ready for it. I should not be sorry, even on Edward's own account, if the good old man should live these ten years.

I am of your opinion (said the Bishop;) I am not fond of having a young man undertake the

management of a parish, till he have obtained a little experience. I should much rather indeed wish my young friend, for the first ten years, to be the doctor's curate, than his successor.—The gentlemen both of the army and navy, think a novitiate in an underpost is necessary; and I see not why it is not as necessary in the church.

As our first question, then, my dear sir, (said Mr. Langton) is now determined, let us proceed to the second. What institution, and what course of study, would you advise me to put my son upon? He takes his first degree in february next. Should you wish him to continue at college, till he take his second? or, is the university as little adapted for theological studies at this period of his education, as I thought it was at first?

I know not what to say, (said the Bishop.) If you were sure he could keep himself from all bad connections, which at his time of life, are the most dangerous—all sceptical misleaders—and what is still more common, the seductions of idleness—and if, at the same time, he had any able friend to overlook his life, and superintend his theological studies, he might certainly pur-

sue them at the university better than any where else. But as the chances, on all these heads, are against him, I believe I should rather advise you to take him home, and be yourself his tutor.

My dear sir, (replied Mr. Langton) you pay me too high a compliment, in supposing me qualified for any such office. I could read Greek and Latin formerly, and know a little of those languages still; but how to direct the studies of a young divine, I should be utterly at a loss.

I do not lay so great a stress on languages, (said the Bishop) as many people do. One thing at least he will learn with you, which he cannot learn at college. He will see the beauty of a regular, and well-ordered family; and of the proper mean between business and amusement. He will see, in the happiest manner, religion mixing, as it always ought to mix, with the common affairs of life. And let me tell you, that these things impressed on his mind, and formed into habits, will be of more service to him in his future life, than all the Greek and Latin that Scaliger could have put into him. I may add, that if he do not receive these lessons now, he may never have an opportunity of receiving them.

For, if he go to the university, he will probably, when he leaves it, enter immediately on some country curacy. If yourswere not a house of instruction I should give my advice in a different manner.—Besides, you will remember, we are not so properly forming a complete divine, as instructing a young clergyman in such knowledge, as mayhereafter make him most useful in a country parish. To superintend your son's studies, in this light, I should think you would find no very difficult task.

If I found it no *difficult* task, (said Mr.Langton) I should certainly find it a very *pleasing* one. I should think it the greatest pleasure of my life to see my son, growing under my own care, into a useful man. But I should neither know what books to put into his hands, nor how to direct him to a proper use of them.

There is one book, (replied the Bishop) the new Testament, which you are well acquainted with, and which is the chief book to put into his hands. And when he has read his Testament well over, if you should ask me, what he should read next, I should answer, the Testament.—And if you should ask me, what after that? I should again answer, the Testament. In short,

I would have him read his Testament over and over, till he is perfect master of it: till he can readily tell you, what our Saviour, or St. Paul, says, on this, or that subject: and if you begin any passage, can with promptness go on, at least with the sense of it. As all the instruction he will give, must come from this book, he should certainly make himself perfect master of it; and have it ready to draw out on all occasions. Of the old Testament, also, he should make himself perfect master. He who does not take up the full connection between them, sees neither Testament in its best point of light.

But can he make himself *perfect master* of the old Testament, (said Mr. Langton) without understanding Hebrew?

I might express myself, (answered the Bishop) rather too strongly. In forming an accurate biblical scholar, no doubt a knowledge of Hebrew is absolutely necessary. But you recollect, we do not look so high. I could wish him however to be as much master of the old Testament, as our English translation, and the helps that may be afforded him, will allow. If he occasionally consult *Poole's Annotations* (his *Synopsis* is a very learned, and voluminous work)

and the continuation of Poole's Annotations, I think he will not easily meet with better assistance.* An accurate knowledge however of his Greek Testament, I cannot dispense with. And when he reads his English Testament, as I have been prescribing, I would have him keep the Greek always open before him, with two or three of the best commentators. But before he consult his commentators, let him read the naked text, such a portion as relates to the same subject, two or three times over, both in the Greek and English, and make his own remarks, which you may occasionally examine. He may then consult the learned works before him, on such passages as he does not clearly understand. I do not know a book, which throws a stronger light upon a variety of passages, in the New

* Several parts of the old Testament have lately been newly translated. Mr. Green translated the Psalms: Bishop Horne has also translated them. Lowth has given us a new version of Isaiah; Blaney of Jeremiah; and Newcombe (primate of Ireland) of Ezekiel, and the minor prophets.—Osterwald's arguments of the old, and new Testament is, I think, a good book. And Mr. Gray has lately published a *Key to the old Testament*, which a young divine will find a useful introduction to it.

Testament, than Lightfoot's Hebrew, and Talmudical Exercitations. The young student will find there a large collection of Jewish proverbs, idioms, and modes of speech. By these he may be able to solve many a difficulty, which has puzzled those commentators, who have endeavoured to find an abstruse doctrine, where nothing was intended, but a simple proverb. You will not however suppose, I wish him to read over so voluminous a work: but only to consult it occasionally. In all these things, however, you will direct his judgment, and let him close with nothing, that does not strike him with conviction. I should frequently also put him on giving in writing his opinion of this, or that doctrine, or passage of scripture. And if he do it with accuracy, it will at once improve him in *knowledge*, *composition*, and *style*. You may sometimes also make him give you on paper, the whole scheme of the Christian religion, from its being first *promised*, at the *fall*. Its *origin* points its *end*; which was, to restore mankind to that state of purity they had lost. The new Testament opens the *means* of doing this through *faith*, and *obedience*. But, as it is impossible for man to live up to a perfect rule of duty, the

gospel has promised a gracious atonement for repented sin, through the death of Christ.—From such a view of religion, well settled, and digested, he will see the propriety of taking his religious opinions from the *general scope* of the gospel, and not from *particular texts*, which often clash with each other, unless the context be well examined. It will shew him the impropriety also of making religion consist in *faith*, or *works*, or *sincerity*, or any single part; but will direct him to take a general, comprehensive, and uniform view of the gospel, by laying all its parts together, and uniting in one plan the Old Testament and the New.

I perfectly agree with you, (said Mr. Langton) in making our young student draw from the fountain-head a knowledge of the religion he is to teach. But as the church of England puts its own sense on certain passages of scripture, it will be necessary for him to examine these passages. What books, therefore, would you advise me to put into his hands? Pearson on the Creed, and Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles, used to be the books, I think, commonly recommended.

The doctrines of the church of England,

(said the Bishop) will always, I think, be found best in the doctrines of scripture. If he is master of the latter, I am persuaded he will not be deficient in the former. Your mentioning these books brings to my mind a circumstance of my early life. I was in company with a witty layman, when somebody mentioning Pearson, and Burnet, he said, he thought them the most satyrical books in the English language.—Satyrical! said I, sir, in great surprise, how do you make out that? "Why, said he, do you not think it is a satyr on the church of England, that two such great folios are wanted to explain those *necessary* things, which we must all *believe?* Depend upon it, those books were written with no good design." There was no way of answering such an odd burst of jocularity, but by a smile. So far, however, as the *length of the books* is affected, I think the remark not very unjust. They explain some things of which an explanation is not necessary; and other things with more words than are necessary: so that both the volumes, I think, might be compressed into a less compass. I own I am somewhat of the opinion of the Greek philosopher, who called *a great book a great evil.*

I should not, therefore, wish to set a young man on reading these books from end to end. I should fear they might tire, and disgust him.—Nor should I wish him to read either Burnet on the thirty nine articles, or Pearson on the creed; or any other book, as if he were going *there for his religion.* I should never wish him *to have the idea* of going any where for his religion, but to the scriptures themselves: And, indeed, I rather think, that some of my brethren lay too much stress on these books in their ordinations. I fear it may have sometimes a tendency to impress their young candidates with an idea that the *doctrines of the church of England, and the doctrines of the new Testament*, are two things. It looks like being at more pains in preserving the fence, than in cultivating the field. For myself, I follow the example of those bishops, who examine their candidates chiefly out of the scriptures.—I do not require of the young candidate a nice acquaintance with the languages. If I find him pretty well versed in the Greek of the new Testament, I am satisfied. But I am rather strict in my scriptural examination. I expect from him first a *rational proof* of the authenticity of scripture; and then, a *scriptural proof* of the

divinity of Christ—the resurrection—the atonement—the influence of the holy spirit; and some other points. I expect from him also, a summary of the arguments from prophecy, and miracles; and some account of the history of christianity; and its connection with the old Testament. On some of these questions I make him deliver his opinion in writing; and chiefly in his own language. But I do not puzzle him much with predestination, freewill, the foreknowledge of God, and other questions, which he can neither explain to me, nor I to him.

But the thirty-nine articles, (said Mr. Langton,) which profess to hold the doctrines of the church of England, discuss some of these nice questions; and he must, in order to be a minister in the church of England, subscribe those articles.

He must, (said the Bishop.) But the articles themselves are candid enough to assert, *that holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation*; *so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith*; *or be thought requisite, or neces-*

*sary to salvation.** So that subscribing the articles, so far as they may be proved from scripture, seems enough in regulating a man's *private opinion*; for it is absolutely impossible, and therefore cannot be expected, that ten thousand men should think exactly alike on so many points. But, at the same time, each of these subscribers must attend most conscientiously to the *great end* for which these articles were imposed; namely, *not to suffer unnecessary disputations, altercations, or questions to be raised, which may nourish faction both in the church, and commonwealth.*† So that if he teach, or preach any thing contrary to what he really thinks the sense of the articles, whatever his *private opinion* may be, he certainly breaks his engagement. His silence on these points answers all the end required by the articles; and when a thing answers its end, what more can be desired?—But even though his private opinion may in some *little matters*, as it probably will, deviate from the letter of the articles, yet if he do not *in general* approve them, he still, I think, acts very unfairly by subscribing them.

* See Art. vi. † See the King's declaration.

But are not the articles, (said Mr. Langton) more strict? Does not the subscriber say, he believes them *agreeable to the word of God*; and that he subscribes them *ex animo?*

He does, (answered the Bishop) and if he cannot do it under the limitations, which I have marked out, I should advise him not to subscribe them at all. For myself, I can honestly say, I think the articles are *agreeable to the word of God*, as I would say of many other good books; that is, I think them so on the whole; for I am clear, it could not be supposed, or expected, that my opinion, much less the opinions of thousands, can accord, in every minute particular, with the sentiments of any man, or body of men. But still, if I believe them, *on the whole, agreeable to the word of God*, I can subscribe them *ex animo*.

But though you do not lay that stress, (said Mr. Langton) on Pearson, and Burnet, which some Bishops do, yet you mean not, I suppose, to throw any odium upon them. They may perhaps explain many things to a young student, which he may not otherwise understand.

Undoubtedly, (said the Bishop.) They are excellent books; only I think they are better calculated to lye at his elbow, and be consulted

occasionally, as any difficulty arises, than to lye constantly before him on his desk. Instead therefore of formally reading these books, I should wish him to attain the same knowledge by putting him on reading other books on these subjects, more agreeably, and more compendiously written. A heavy book is a great obstacle to a young man's improvement, especially if he be of a lively disposition. I remember a *Frenchman* at college, who had the heavy, dry, logical work of Smiglesius put into his hands. His tutor recommended it as an excellent book, which he ought to make himself master of. He read it therefore, and plodded over it with great assiduity, but little effect. He still however thought the fault was in himself, rather then in the book; and being very conscientious, he exerted his powers of attention as much as he could. A wag coming into his room one morning, and tumbling over his books, and papers, found the following ejaculation, "God give me grace to read over Smiglesius.—After our young man has made himself a tolerable master of the text of scripture, the next subject I should recommend to him is, the *authenticity* of it. And indeed I wish all Bishops would, as I do, lay a very

great stress upon this point. On this depends every thing. If we believe the scriptures are true, we may safely acknowledge the truth of many things, which we can never entirely understand; as the Trinity—the atonement of Christ—and the assistance, and influence of the holy spirit; all which things are plainly revealed in scripture; and may be the objects of our faith, *so far as they are revealed*, though we do not *clearly understand* them. Indeed, as they are things which relate rather to God, than man, it is impossible they can ever be made perfectly clear to a human intellect. Dr. Lardner, I think, hath proved beyond cavil, the *authenticity* of the scriptures in his *Credibility of the gospel.* I wish I could recommend his style, and manner of writing, which I must own are uncommonly heavy, with as much confidence, as I can the strength of his argument. But as I know no book to recommend in its room,* I could wish Edward to make

* Another book may now be recommended in its room. Mr. Paley, archdeacon of Carlisle, has published an excellent work, under the title of the *Evidences of Christianity*, in which he has brought Lardner's argument into a narrow compass, illustrated it with elegance, and strengthened it with judgment.

himself master of Lardner's argument, by tracing with him the evangelical writings into apostolic times; which forms a mode of proving the *authenticity* of scripture, not to be withstood. Jenkins's *reasonableness of christianity*, though it too is wordy enough, is another excellent book; and will contribute greatly to ground a young divine in his religious faith. The arguments from prophecies and miracles, I would have him familiar with. I mean such prophecies particularly as relate to the Messiah. As to those on which Bishop Newton has chiefly employed his pen—such as relate to the ancient monarchies, and such as endeavour to explain the revelations of St. John, he may leave them to some future time, as I think they are, in general, too obscure to afford much light to the christian religion. The arguments also (from reasoning on the fact) for the *resurrection* of Christ, and (from scripture) for his *atonement*, are points which I should wish him to study with great accuracy.—On some of these deep subjects the best book I know is *Butler's Analogy*. For myself, I never met with any book, which carried conviction with it more strongly. It is very obscure in some places; and, on the whole, rather

unpleasantly written. But I think, if the Bishop's arguments were moulded into easier, and pleasanter language, it would be an excellent book. Now on these several subjects, I would have him not only read, but write. A man may read, and fall asleep: but if he write, he must think. But you will see more of my mode of educating a young clergyman, from what I have just said to you of my mode of examining him.* When he has fixed the great *landmarks of his religion*, if I may so speak, his reading may take a more general cast. What I mean is this. I suppose him now to have settled in his mind all the grand points of religion. They become heads, therefore, to which he can refer every thing he reads. He takes up a volume of sermons, for instance, on various subjects. The first sermon he reads, is on the resurrection of Christ. Perhaps he finds something in it, which is still new to him. If that be the case, he carries it, like a tradesman, to his general account. It is so much addition to his stock. The next sermon, perhaps, may be on the nature of faith—he considers it in the same way, and so on.

* See page 1, of a paper inserted at page 274.

I am glad to hear you speak so favourably, (said Mr. Langton) on this mode of reading. Most of my divinity has been collected from sermons. We have so many, that are good, that I think an excellent body of divinity may be collected from them. It has been my constant practice, several years, to read a sermon every day, when I am at home. My only objection, or prejudice, perhaps, to this *mode of writing* is, that, as the limits of a sermon are confined, it may be sometimes too concise, and sometimes too diffuse.

This may often, (said the Bishop) be an advantage; for, as writers are commonly fond of their own thoughts, and unwilling to relinquish them, their compositions, perhaps, may be the better for being more compressed. Besides, a subject may easily be divided into two discourses, if there is more matter, than can easily be disposed of in one; and if there be too little, it is easy, among the various topics of Christianity, to add a few useful observations on any subject. After all, however, this can only be an objection to discourses from the pulpit. When the sermon is printed, it is of no consequence, whether it be a little longer, or a little shorter.

The writer will then take care to add, and retrench every thing with his best judgment. The practice of reading a sermon every day, which you have observed, I should recommend strongly to your son. In the course of a few years he must become a very able divine. I should wish him also never to omit reading a chapter in the Greek Testament every day. It is a practice, which I have so constantly enjoined to myself, that I do not recollect I have once intermitted it these forty years. One thing more, on the head of sermons, I should recommend. We have the works of many excellent divines of the last century—Barrow, Mede, Sanderson, Tillotson, and many others; all of them full of matter, but formally digested, dry in their manner, and often, perhaps, intermixed with Popish controversies, and other points, which relate more to the times they lived in, than to ours. In these copious mines, a young divine may dig with great advantage. He will find abundance of rich ore, which he may melt down, and convert to use. In plain language, he may make excellent discourses out of their matter—Or, it may be a good exercise for a young divine, to analize sermons—that is, just

to note the heads, and principal arguments, which will increase his knowledge on a variety of subjects. Young divines are sometimes advised to read carefully some good discourse; and then to write, on the same subject, from memory. I cannot say, I much approve this method. It puts them in leading-strings. They do not walk by themselves They are always seeking for the assistance of others. It would be a much better method, I think, for a young man first to write from himself; and then to read the thoughts of others on the same subject. He may then form some judgment of his own redundances, or deficiencies.

Mr. Langton entirely approved the Bishop's remarks. But I find, (said he) you just now classed Tillotson's discourses among those, whose *matter* only is admirable. Now I have often heard Dr. Tillotson spoken of as an exact model of eloquence, and pulpit oratory.

Why, (said the Bishop) I own Tillotson never pleased me in the light of an eloquent writer. His words, (I think) are often ill chosen; and the construction of his sentences wordy, and inharmonious. But, as a modern language is always varying, the fashion of its

style differs, like the fashion of our cloaths. Our ancestors, in Charles the first's time dressed, in my opinion, more becomingly than we do now; and many are of opinion, the style of the last century was stronger, and more nervous, than the more polished language of the present day. I mean not, however, to pronounce absolutely in favour of one, or the other: All I wish to observe is, that the antiquated style of our ancestors would not, at this period of refinement, be relished as pulpit-eloquence.

What books, then, of modern divinity, (said Mr. Langton) would you chiefly recommend to my young man's attention, as *models of composition?*

In the choice of such books, (replied the Bishop) I dare say, you can advise him, as well as I: and your study (I doubt not) will furnish him with the best. We have, (as you have just observed) so many good sermons in our own language, that I know not how to appreciate. We have some excellent sermons also by French divines. Saurin's I have read, and much admire. Bourdelon's I have never

read; but have heard they are still better. The French oratory is greatly more animated than ours. But though their sermons contain much good matter, placed in very striking lights, they would be called, perhaps, affected and theatrical, if delivered from an English pulpit. With regard, however, to a *model*, I would observe, that I should not wish a young man to set any mode of composition as a pattern before him. It will always occasion stiffness and formality. Let him read good books, and he will naturally strike out a model for himself.

I am very glad, my dear sir, (said Mr. Langton) to find your opinion on these subjects, so nearly my own. I have always thought, that skill in composition was best learned by reading good authors; and that, as to style, if a young man have not an ear to catch the melody of a sentence himself, it will answer no end to give him rules. If he *read* and *write* together, the book will naturally improve the pen. Thus too, in *reading out*, or speaking in public, I have known many a young man's utterance spoiled by attending to rules. Instead of thinking about his subject, which would give him a na-

tural, and easy elocution, he is thinking about his rules, which often lead him into what I may call a *monotony of emphasis*.

I can allow *you*, (said the Bishop) to speak on this subject, as I know nobody, (without a compliment) who reads more properly, than I have always thought you do.

If I do, (replied Mr. Langton) I know not by what art, except that of endeavouring to *read* as I *speak*. Every man *speaks* with propriety; even the most unlettered peasant. You never hear his emphasis wrongly placed. And if in *reading* we could but conceive ourselves *speaking*, we should *read* with propriety also. But among the studies you recommend to my young man, would it not be right to introduce a little ecclesiastical history?

No doubt, my dear sir, (replied the Bishop) ecclesiastical history, and many other things, are necessary; but I was desirous, first, of fixing the great point—a *just knowledge* of the religion he is to teach. The *deviations* from it, (which form the grand subjects of ecclesiastical history) he may examine afterwards. For his religion he must go early to the fountain-head. Other things he may get at leisure, and at second-hand. But there

is still another point, about which I am even more solicitous, if possible, than about the first. The point I mean is, that after he has gained a *knowledge* of his religion, he should make himself an *example* of it. He who teaches religion, without exemplifying it, loses the advantage of its best argument. Indeed, I know not so contemptible a figure as that man makes, on whom it may be retorted, *Thou that teacheth another, teachest thou not thyself?* Now, in order to raise in him an evangelical way of thinking, I know no book more useful, than *Law's Serious Call.* It is not only a very religious book, but a very well written, ingenious, and entertaining one. Some may perhaps think it, in a few parts, carried too far; but I believe it would be a difficult matter to confute any of the author's arguments. Indeed I never met with, what appeared to me, a fairer commentary on the precepts of the Gospel; and I have heard many serious people say, this was the first book that brought them to recollection.* His volume too, on Christian perfection, is an admirable work; though I know not whether it is

* Dr. Johnson particularly makes this acknowledgement.

not inferior to the other. About plays and some other things, he is certainly too rigid. There may be a good play, as well as a loose one. To condemn them all as profane, is certainly wrong. Law afterwards became a mere mystic, and entirely lost his rationality. Jacob Boeman was his apostle, and led him into all the fooleries of his own creed. Besides Law's *Serious Call*, there are many other books, which do not occur to me at present; but you will easily find, and occasionally recommend them to him. I remember being much pleased with a little book, though it is now long since I read it, written by Mr. Herbert,* intitled, *A Parson to the Church.* There are also several admirable charges, given by bishops to their clergy, which may be read by a young man with great advantage. Having thus settled these two great points—the *knowledge* of religion, and the necessity of *explaining* it—(if I may so speak, by a good *example*) other things will follow of course. Among the first, I should wish to give our young divine a few rules on the *construction* of his sermons. His *style* I will leave him to model himself.

* His life is written by Mr. Isaac Walton.

I was waiting for something of this kind, (said Mr. Langton). I know few points on which a young clergyman stands more in need of instruction. Fresh from the University, his first thoughts commonly are, that as a teacher, he must shew, that he knows more than those whom he teaches. His *subject*, therefore, is often deep, and his *language* learned; whereas people of a higher class want rather to be reminded of their duty, than taught it: and people of a lower class cannot be taught it in too plain a manner.

You have just touched those points, (said the Bishop) on which I meant to give my young friend a few hints. He cannot open the doctrines, and precepts of Christianity too plainly. Christianity was meant to be preached to the poor; and, therefore, the poor are certainly capable of being made to understand it. And in this plain, intelligible way, even the mysteries of religion may be opened to them. Thus, with regard to the Trinity, the lowest of the people may be told, that, although the Scriptures speak uniformly of one God, there are various passages, in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are separately men-

tioned. But as the nature of this union is not opened in Scripture, it is impossible for the wisest man to explain it. We must just, therefore, take the Scripture-account, and be satisfied without knowing more, till it please God hereafter to reveal it to us. Thus again, with regard to the atonement of Christ, we may explain the doctrine so far as to tell the people, that if we lead good lives, and repent of our sins, God will forgive those sins through the death of Christ. But if we go on to explain *how*, and *why*, the death of Christ satisfies God for the sins of mankind, we get into difficulties, which neither we can explain, nor our audience understand. Thus again, with regard to the Holy Ghost, we must not pretend to explain *how* it influences the minds of good men. We can account for this no more than we can for the manner in which our souls influence our bodies. We are fully convinced of one, and may just as easily believe the other, though we can explain neither. The eternity of future punishments, the fore-knowledge of God, and the freedom of our will, are all questions of the same kind. What the Scriptures give us ground to believe, on all these subjects,

we may speak; but let us beware of explanations. Learned men, indeed, have endeavoured to explain many of these things. But as the same uncertainty still prevails in the world, which prevailed before their explanations, it is plain their explanations have been of little use. If, however, they chuse to exercise themselves on these curious inquiries, (though for what end I never could see) let them at least not disturb the common people with them. As I thus wish my young friend to treat the doctrines of Scripture in the plainest, and easiest manner, so do I wish him also to use the plainest, and easiest words. The common people are so far from understanding technical, or scientifical terms, that it is difficult to make them understand such as are most in use. For myself, I do not pretend to be a man of great learning; but in my discourses, I endeavour to be much less so, than I really am. I scarce ever write a sermon, which I do not examine with great attention afterwards, and substitute an easier word, when I can, for every one that appears to me rather difficult. It is out of fashion now to introduce Greek and

* This is very true, of Bishop Wilson's sermons, which are as plain as possible.

Latin into sermons; but the young academician still loves to put in, here and there, a sounding word. A young clergyman, of my acquaintance, my wife's nephew, preached lately in a church, where I was present. He gave us a good discourse, but I thought too much polished for his audience, which was a very plain one. I put it to the test, however, by asking an intelligent farmer, how he liked it? The farmer said, he believed the *doctrine* was very good; but there were a great many *fine words* in it. As I thought so too, I told the young man what we both thought. He candidly owned, he had two discourses in his sermon-case; but on seeing me at church, he took that which he thought the better. I as candidly told him, I should have been more pleased, if he had preached rather to his *poor neighbours*, than to *me:* for most of them, (said I) have only this one mode of instruction, whereas I have many. There are few young men, who have not a little of this vanity in preaching to the upper part of their congregation; but the more they lay it aside, the more they approach apostolic simplicity.

But, (said Mr. Langton) though you would have a young man preach with great plainness, as no doubt he ought, and not disturb his congregation with points of controversy; yet, as far as he himself is concerned, you have no objection, I suppose, to his making himself acquainted with those learned questions, which often interest divines so much. The right must lie on one side, and it may be of great use to him, in many cases, to settle on which side it does lie.

I know not, (said the Bishop) whether, in some of our most agitated questions, either side can be fairly said to be right, or wrong. So much may be offered on both sides, that neither, perhaps, can be absolutely condemned. Thus, for instance, in the dispute with dissenters about church-government, as church government is not precisely defined in scripture, we have no right to condemn presbytery, though we may like our own form better.—Again, with regard to faith, and works; it appears to me, on laying the whole scheme of the gospel together, that *its grand intention was, to restore man to that purity he had lost by the fall*; that a *holy life*, therefore, is the great point to be insisted on;—

faith the means; and the *merits of Christ* to make up our deficiences. At the same time, I dare not condemn the Solfidean, who lays the whole stress on faith: and says, that works will follow. So they will, if faith be what it ought to be: but I, fearing mistakes, am as strenuous in avoiding any imputation on good works, as he is in avoiding any imputation on faith. And yet, as we both mean equally well, and have both the words of scripture on our side, it may be wrong, perhaps, for either to condemn the other.—Even with regard to the great and important question on the *divinity of Christ*, there are many texts of scripture, which seem plainly to prove both his *divinity*, and his *humanity*; and if I were to take my creed *only* from these texts, I scarce know which side I should espouse. But in discussing this question, it appears to me the right way to take into it the *whole scheme of the gospel*. As a part of this scheme I plainly find it set forth in scripture, that *Christ's death was an atonement for sin*; and I ask myself, whether I think it possible that a *human being* should take upon himself the office of making such atonement? This is sufficient to satisfy *myself*, that my side of the question is right. At the same time, I

dare not condemn the upright unitarian, who thinks he draws his best proofs from the *words of scripture*; though even these too, in my own opinion, militate in my cause: for Christ, we know, was the Emanuel, both God and man; so that we, likewise, with the unitarian, in one sense, attribute humanity to him. Thus in a number of other questions, which have not an immoral tendency, I dare not condemn such persons as differ from me. If they be sincere, good men, my language to them would be, let us not dispute about the few points on which we differ; but let us rather esteem each other for the many, on which we agree. If, on the other hand, I have reason to think them ill-disposed, bad men, I am silent, and avoid dispute with them of any kind; well-knowing that I may raise warm blood; but can never convince an uncandid mind.

But, (said Mr. Langton) you do not object to our young divine's making himself acquainted with what may be said on all these controverted points. A little knowledge of this kind will, at least, keep him from being mislead by specious arguments, if he should happen to be in the way of them.

Certainly, (said the Bishop.) I have no objection to his obtaining any knowledge of that kind. My objection goes only to the practical use of such knowledge. I wish him to be candid to all people; and not to engage so far in polemics, as to suppose nobody can be right, but himself. Besides, I am chiefly earnest to have him a good parish minister; and I know not, that I have often met with very active polemics under that description.—And yet I know not, whether I should wish him, at any rate, to spend much of his time in reading either ecclesiastical history; or modern polemics. Ecclesiastical history is, in my opinion, the most melancholy history that can be read. When we read a history of Turks, and Saracens, we expect nothing but accounts of violence and blood-shed. But when we read a history of the progress of christianity, we are shocked to find it a history of the malevolent passions, shewing themselves in every shape they can assume. The motto of an ecclesiastical history should be our Saviour's prophecy, *I came not to send peace upon earth, but a sword.* And as to modern polemics, if that prophecy characterizes them too severely, it may be changed into, *I came not to send peace upon earth, but abuse.*

Alas! (said Mr. Langton) I often think ecclesiastical history puts a strong argument against christianity in the mouth of the unbeliever. I protest, when I consider the havoc, and violence which the christian religion has occasioned in the world, I know not, off-hand, what answer I should oppose to it.

Why, my dear sir, (said the Bishop) all these religious difficulties, in the first place, may be resolved into the unsearchable counsels of God; and that is always an answer sufficiently satisfactory to a good christian, who firmly believes in the truth of scripture. We must humbly therefore lay a finger on our lips. Wise reasons, no doubt, God may have for permitting all this violence, which we cannot fathom. However, if we are candid, we must see, there is nothing here, but what is analogous to all God's dealings with us in this state of trial. He gives us meat, and drink, notwithstanding many of us turn these blessings into riot, and intemperance. In the same way, he offers his gospel to all mankind: and the gospel itself, among other things, becomes a mean of trial. Many make a bad use of it, as they do of food: but if God did not leave us at liberty in the use, or the abuse of his several blessings,

he must turn us into mere machines.—The faulty extremes however, into which both ancient, and modern christians have carried their disputes, may, at least, thus far be useful to our young divine. They may teach him, by a strong contrast, what the gentle spirit of the gospel should be. They may teach him to keep his particular opinions to himself; and convince him that, when published, they administer little else but discord and dispute.—Besides, your polemic who disputes every thing with you, there is another character, which I should wish our young divine to avoid; and that is the character of (what is commonly called) a sound orthodox churchman. The orthodox churchman makes it his business,(*tooth and nail* as they say) to defend every thing that is established. The government of the church of England is faultless.—The education of its members, in our universities, such as cannot be improved. Its liturgy is perfect; creeds, and articles, cannot be amended; pluralities are defensible; and the unequal provision of the clergy, right, and as it should be. Now, though I should despise the man who should become a member of our church, without thinking it *good on the whole*,

yet I could not but suspect the sincerity of him, who would persuade you, there is *nothing but good* in it.

The Bishop and his friend talked afterwards of history, poetry, and other subjects which might be proper to furnish a young man with amusing reading. All young men, (the Bishop observed) who entered into holy orders, should be *equally inclined to divinity*, and should make it *equally* their study. But as to topics of amusement, the mind might take its range, according to its natural disposition. Some liked poetry—others, history, or natural philosophy, or antiquity. On these topics, (he said) he had no observations to make.

Mr. Langton continued several days with the good Bishop, after this conversation, during which time, they occasionally recapitulated the subjects on which they had discoursed; and Mr. Langton put on paper, for the use of his son, the hints the Bishop had given him. But nothing new passed, except that the Bishop wished to admonish his young friend, not to suffer any lighter reading, in which he chose to amuse himself, to interfere with his divinity-studies. He could wish him, (he said) to de-

dicate his mornings to divinity; and he might pass his afternoons, and evenings, when he was not otherwise engaged, with an amusing book. The Bishop said, he often found an early hour in a morning, or a late one at night, the most happy for composition. Both together, he thought no constitution could bear. When he was a young man, (he said) he often indulged a late, studious hour; but he afterwards found, and he believed all people, both young and old, would find, on experience, that the early hour was best.

ON THE

VARIOUS DIFFICULTIES

INCIDENT TO A

CLERICAL LIFE;

OR,

THE CHARACTER OF A CLERGYMAN, WHO MADE A CONSCIENCE OF EVERY THING.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE CHARACTER OF A CLERGYMAN,

WHO

MADE A CONSCIENCE OF NOTHING.

On the Various Difficulties, &c.

As no character is more contemptible than that of a clergyman, who is lost to the decency of his profession, so no character is more justly esteemed, than that of the clergyman, who keeps the true honour, and end of his profession, always in view. He has not only the vices of the world to contend with, but a variety of seducing customs, and popular compliances to oppose, from which his station particularly enjoins him to keep aloof. His education, and the whole course of his life, if he be a conscientious man, abound, therefore, with difficulties peculiar to himself.

With a view to point out some of these difficulties, I have brought together a few anecdotes of a worthy clergyman, who passed respectfully through them all. His name was

Mowbray. I shall introduce him first at college, where he shall speak for himself. From a great number of letters lying before me, written to an old school-fellow, who went to the Temple, when he went to college, I have picked out two or three, which will shew some of the difficulties which young men have there to encounter.

" Dear Charles,

" I gave you some account in my last, of the old school-fellows I met with here, and the new acquaintances, to whom they have introduced me. Like a forward young man, I find I have been far too hasty in forming my connections; and have gotten into difficulties, from which I know not how to escape. I had no idea, when I came here, that a college-life was commonly a train of idleness and dissipation. I came with a resolution to study; but I soon found, that studying was not the first idea of the place. I was invited, by a set of young men, one after another, to breakfast; and, by the rules of the place, was obliged to give a

breakfast in return. Instead of dispatching our meal, like students, we generally continue it from nine until eleven. After dinner also, an hour is consumed in drinking a glass of wine. Supper calls us again together, and ends in a late evening. Thus, you see, into what a vortex I am drawn; and how to get out of it I know not. What is still more miserable, I do all this against my inclination. I see the folly of losing the opportunities of study, which the place affords. I see the loss of time, and the danger of contracting habits of dissipation. I see the ingratitude of abusing my father's kindness, and the insincerity of making him believe I am fitting myself for the church, when, in fact, I am trifling away my time. If I break abruptly from my companions, I convert myself immediately into an odd-fellow. I lose all influence with them, which may, one day, be of use; and I lose the acquaintance of some people, whom I much esteem. As there is nothing vicious in the case, I believe I had better wait for opportunities, and seize them as they arise. If you have any better advice, give it to,

"Your affectionate, &c."

"Aye, my dear Charles, all you say is very true. You talk like a philosopher; and I wish I had the power and ability to act like one. But every man, you know, must be subject to his own genius. If I had my college-life to begin again, with that stock of experience which I now have, I think I could act better than I have done. If the poor stag had sense to take your advice, you would tell him to keep out of the toils. When he is once entangled, your advice comes too late. It is a difficult thing to break with a large body of your acquaintance, with whom you have long lived in friendship, and are under a necessity of spending so much of your time. You cannot be intimate with young men by halves. Besides, they are, in general, men of pleasant manners—not ill-informed for their age; and, though certainly not very correct, yet by no means vicious. You think the heads of colleges should interfere. Aye, certainly; but, to tell you the truth, the evil is deeper than you are aware. The young men of our college, and I believe of every other college, are in a manner the masters of it. They do almost what they please. The tutors, and heads of houses,

find it very difficult to oppose, with any effect, so volatile—so licentious—and so numerous a body. I had heard of your sister's death, before you mentioned it to me, and sincerely sympathize with you. Urge your studies, if you can, with the greater assiduity. Business is the best antidote to grief. Believe me,

"Yours, &c."

The following letter is dated about a year after the last.

"I hope, my dear Charles, I can now give you a better account of myself, than I have hitherto done. Two of the leading members of our society have left the university; and I feel myself of somewhat more consequence than I was. If I could have submitted to be thought an odd-fellow, I could have broken off all intercourse at once. But I am afraid of the character, as I think oddity is not always accompanied with usefulness. Indeed, if I had foreseen the inconveniencies which an unreserved communication would have led me into, I should have been at first more wary than I was. But

getting among many of my old friends, and being introduced to their friends, many of whom were very agreeable fellows, I was insensibly carried into the middle of a stream, which I could not stem. You must not, however, think I ever ran into all the follies of the place. An afternoon-bottle I never would submit to; but generally took a walk after dinner, with one or two, whom I persuaded to think it was more eligible. Nor did I often indulge in a late evening; but was generally abused by the joyous spirits of our society, for being the first to break up a pleasant meeting. As I was led, however, insensibly into the society of these young folks, many of whom I greatly esteemed, I did not think it right to break away from them at once; but parried matters as well as I could. All this mischief, I think, originated from my meeting with so many of my old school-fellows. I cannot, therefore, but think it is rather ill-judged to send a young man to any college, where his old school-fellows are placed; unless we can be sure they are such, in all respects, as we could wish a young man to consort with. The chance, at least, is against it. However, I am glad to inform you, that I think myself now

pretty well at the head of my society, and can manage matters, in a good degree, as I please. And to make some atonement for my past follies, I take upon myself now the character of a reformer. I have confined our breakfast to one hour; which is still, I think, half an hour more than is necessary. All loungers, in studying-hours, I send out of my chamber without ceremony. I have set my face totally against the afternoon bottle; and I have restricted our evening-meeting to one day in the week. I hope, therefore, I have now gotten the better of my difficulties, without breaking with my friends.

"I am yours, &c."

The remark I would make upon this letter is, that it does not give an example which young men should commonly follow. Men of genius only, like Mr. Mowbray, can manage affairs of this kind with judgment and address. Young men, in general, cannot be too cautious in forming their early intimacies at college; but if they happen to get involved with idle people, it is safer to break off abruptly, than to wait, as

this young gentleman did, for a favourable opportunity. If he had not been a young man of a commanding genius, he would, most probably, have been lost. He would have been drawn into connections, from which he could never have extricated himself; and might have formed such habits of idleness, as he could never have overcome.

The next difficulty, which Mr. Mowbray got into, was of a more serious nature. It respected his religious principles. He had now taken his first degree. Most of his old companions, who were all his seniors, were now gone; and, though he was very wary in forming any new intimacies; yet he could not but occasionally mix with young people of his own standing; and especially as he was thought an ingenious man, and his company was much courted. Two, or three of these were men of very pleasing manners; but of a deistical cast. For himself, though intended for the church, he had never been put on any divinity-studies. His father was a plain, worthy man: a good Christian in practice: but little acquainted with the doctrines of Christianity, or the proofs of his religion; and, as he had never doubted the truth of it

himself, he never conceived that any body else could doubt it. His son, however, found it otherwise. He seldom, indeed, ever heard any direct attacks on Christianity; but sly insinuations thrown out amidst gay conversation on other subjects. Sometimes he would hear a little ridicule on the history of the old Testament—or a witticism on our Saviour's miracles—or, perhaps, on the irrationality of the scriptural scheme of redemption. Hints of this kind, continually thrown out on these, and a variety of other topics, though never treated with any shew of argument, began at length to make some impression upon him. He never, indeed, had any doubts or cavils of his own; but, being wholly uninformed, he had nothing to oppose to the doubts and cavils of others. He was naturally of a reasoning turn, and that made the matter so much the worse. The objections he heard seemed founded in truth, because he could not answer them. On the other hand, the good old notions of religion, in which he had been brought up, though wholly unfounded on evidence, had rested so long on authority, that he knew not how to relinquish them. What he had never heard

doubted, seemed to be in a good degree established. In the midst of all this perplexity, the best thing he thought he could do, was to open his mind to a worthy clergyman, whom he had long known—the minister of his father's parish. That good man plainly saw, in his letter, a candid mind, searching after truth, and returned him the following answer:

" Dear Sir,

" Though nothing is more difficult than to convice an obstinate infidel of his errors, because it is not his head, but his heart, that is wrong; so nothing is easier, than to prove the truth of religion to a candid mind, because there are no prejudices of heart to combat; and honest reason is always open to conviction. Take my word for it, my dear Sir, the scruples you mention, are of no consequence. But, as your father tells me he expects you here in a few weeks, we will put off the discussion of them, till you and I meet. In the mean time, to warn you against these philosophers, who beset you, I may venture to assure you, they have never given themselves the trouble to examine the evidences of religion;

but take all their knowledge of it from a few objections, which, like you, they have casually heard in conversation. The true reasoner seeks for *evidence*, before he listens to *objections*. When he is secure of *evidence*, *objections* do not easily shake him. He has the best evidence, for instance, that the tides of the ocean are governed by the moon. Objections may puzzle him, but his faith in his theory remains unshaken. Thus with regard to Christianity; confirm your belief of the authenticity of Scripture, (for which you have sufficient evidence) and difficulties, which you must expect to find in religion, as in every thing else, can never overthrow it. Even if objections cannot readily be answered, it is of little consequence. Your vessel is held fast by a sheet-anchor; and the few waves that beat against it, can have little effect. But of these points more, when we meet. Before I conclude, however, let me just, for the present, add a few remarks on one objection, which seems to have taken particular hold of you. I allude to what you say of the variety of false religions, with which the world hath ever abounded. Your inference, I suppose, is, though you do not absolutely express

it, that Christianity may be false, (why may it not?) as well as others. But consider, my dear Sir, whether it is a logical mode of arguing, to say, that, because there have been many tyrants in the world, all kings are tyrants; or, because there are many hypocrites, all people, who have any appearance of religion, are hypocrites. Can you argue so absurdly, as to deduce the falsehood of our religion from the falsehood of another? Every religion must certainly be tried by its own evidence; not by another's falsehood. Consider this, and believe me,

"Yours, &c."

This letter, with the subsequent conversations, entirely settled Mr. Mowbray's scruples; and, when he returned to college, he was not only able to baffle such little attacks as he met with, but to settle also the religious opinions of two or three of his more ingenuous friends.

The next difficulty, that presented itself to him, was the choice of a mode of life. In general, he was determined to take orders;

but, in what way he should follow his profession was the doubt. Three ways presented themselves to him: One was, to offer himself a candidate for a fellowship, in which he had good reason to think he might succeed. Another was to accept an offer that had been made him, of travelling with a young nobleman. The third was, to take a curacy, and endeavour at once to qualify himself for a living, if it should be offered to him. Though the discussion of these points did not affect his conscience, but engaged him only in a prudential enquiry; yet, as they were points of such importance, as would greatly affect his future life, he thought they well deserved a very serious examination. The result was, that fellows of colleges, when resident, unless they were tutors, or had some other active employment, he thought, led idle, and very unprofitable lives. The life of a travelling tutor also, he thought very dissipated; and, as far as he had observed, would disqualify him, in a good degree, after he got home, for the duties of his profession. He resolved, therefore, as soon as he took orders, to engage immediately in a curacy.

But here a new difficulty arose. On examining the thirty-nine articles, he was rather staggered at the idea of a subscription; but, on mentioning his scruples to the kind friend, to whom he had before applyed, his doubts were resolved by the following letter:

"It is always, my dear sir, a great pleasure to me to see scruples in a young mind. He who never doubts, can never believe. His faith is without principle.—With regard to the articles, in the first place, I think they have been ill-treated both by friends and enemies. The many obsolete terms, and scholastic phrases, which occur in them, have occasioned scruples on one hand, and objections on the other, which do not belong to them. When they are well understood, I think there is very little, at which a sober christian need recoil.—But we will talk them over together, when we meet in July. For the present, let me observe, that if the candidate for orders cannot reconcile himself to the *general and simple idea* of every article, I think he should not subscribe at all. But then again, with regard to the various explanations which arise on each article, he must be left at some liberty. The articles themselves, by charitably

referring us to scripture (see Art. vi.) allow this liberty. Thus, with regard to the first article, we profess we believe in *one God*; and also in the *holy Trinity*. This I call the *general and simple* idea of the article. But with regard to the explanatory parts of the article, I subscribe them only *as they agree with scripture*. Indeed it is impossible, that so many thousand people, as have subscribed these articles, can agree in every minute particular. On the common maxim therefore that, *nemo tenetur ad impossibile*, it cannot be supposed, that it was ever expected. Though all who subscribe, must *believe in the Trinity*; yet people may have their particular opinions with regard to the attributes, and *substance*, as it is expressed, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Another thing may be considered. The *great end* of the articles, which were imposed in Queen Elizabeth's time, certainly was, to preserve the peace of the church. This too gives us some latitude in our subscription. It follows, that in this light we are chiefly to look at them. He, therefore, who can subscribe to their *general sense*, as, I have just explained it, and takes care never to militate (whatever he may *think in private*)

against what he honestly supposes to be the *particular* meaning in the explanation of each article, may, in my opinion, subscribe with a very easy conscience.

"I am, &c. &c."

After he was settled in his curacy, the first difficulty he had to contend with, was a narrow income. At college, where he had every thing, in a manner, provided for him, and where his father bore his expenses, he was not so sensible how his money was expended. But now, when he had the entire management of his own affairs; and was determined, that his father, who had enough to do with his money, should be at no farther expense with him, he found he had a new trade to learn—the art, which was not easy, of balancing his *necessities* with his *means*. The little stock he had to begin with, was rather carelessly expended at first; and he found himself aground before he was aware. This was a good lesson to him. He had credit it is true, enough to supply his wants. But the idea of living on credit, was very formidable to

him. He resolved, therefore, to get out of that disagreeable state, as soon as possible; to make his wants as few as he could;—and for the future to depend on his own frugality and œconomy. In this resolution he persevered, and found himself, in a year or two, not only master of all his expenses, but with a little sum of money in his pocket for any emergence. He used often to say, he thought any man might be rich, if he pleased. A large family indeed, or misfortune, altered the case; but in general, a man of narrow fortune, by contracting his wants, and by living within his income, might have more than his wants required; which a man of the greatest fortune could not have without œconomy. So that, in fact, œconomy, he said, reduced all fortunes, in a manner, to one level.

Another great difficulty, of which he at first complained, when he went to his curacy, was the want of books. At college he enjoyed a continual feast. He had arts and sciences, in every shape, placed before him; and could roam from one to another, without satiety.—This made the spare diet of a poor curate's library go down, at first, but heavily. He began, how-

ever, to consider, that there might be a luxury of the mind, which ought to be repressed, as well as of the appetite. By degrees, therefore, he began to acquiesce in these prudent maxims, that a professional man ought to study such books chiefly as relate to his profession;—and that a multifarious mode of reading, though it might obtain him the title of a learned man, and make him shine in conversation, would but little advance him in the knowledge of his own profession.—Under the influence of these judicious maxims, he reconciled himself to a few good divinity-books, which his own little study afforded; and became a better divine, by so much as he became a less general scholar.

The civilities he met with in his parish led him into his next difficulty. He was a very pleasing young man; and as the neighbourhood was genteel, he was oftener invited among them, than was agreeable to him. The great objects of his fear, from these frequent invitations, were *dissipation* and *indulgence*. To pay his occasional compliments to his neighbours, he thought right; but rounds of visiting, as is common in country towns, he conceived to be a great incroachment on his time. His parish

engagements, and his preparation for Sunday, left him but little time for pursuing his other studies; and he was very desirous to have it broken in upon as little as possible. When he dined, therefore, he never chose to sit long after dinner; and when he drank tea, he rarely spent the evening. Business was his apology; and, as he was known to be a young man, who did not neglect his business, his apology was never ill-taken; and, indeed, his company (like other things, that are not easily to be had) was the more desired. Cards he never touched; and that made it the easier for him, when the company broke into card-parties, to withdraw.

As he was thus fearful of contracting habits of *dissipation*, among his rich neighbours, he was equally fearful of getting habits of *indulgence*. He never suffered his appetite to range among niceties; but always made his meal of some plain dish, that stood near him. Wine he never tasted; or did but just taste it, for form's sake. No man, he thought, had a natural inclination for wine. A love for it is merely induced by *habit*; and when it becomes a *want*, it becomes often an *inconvenience*. All this strictness in eating and drinking, he

practised, not only as a religious and temperate man, but as a prudent man also, that he might not form such habits in his youth, as would call for more indulgence, when he grew old; and might create wants, which it might not be so easy, in many parts of his life, to supply. He could not, however, do all this without great exertions, and many efforts of that independent spirit, which alone can make a man master of his own actions. After a little perseverance, as his character was well known, all solicitation ceased, and he was the more respected.

But, though he shunned conviviality among his richer neighbours, he was very desirous of convivial intercourse with his poorer parishioners. He was acquainted with an amiable, and benevolent clergyman, who used always to attend the christening-suppers, and club-feasts, of his poor neighbours; to which he always contributed the value of his own portion. His motive, on these occasions, was to be a regulating principle among them; and to teach them, by example, to follow the good old proverb, which enjoins us *to be merry and wise*. He was a man of so much dignity of

character, and ready wit, that he overawed any appearance of impropriety. At the same time, he could adapt himself to his uninformed company, with so much ease—had such a fund of good humour about him, shewing itself in a thousand lively ways—and could command such a variety of pleasing conversation, that his honest neighbours were all disappointed, when any accident prevented his appearing among them. What he said about the weather—about harvest—or the time of sowing—was received like an oracle. At the same time, he could throw in little pieces of advice—or make up a difference—or give a gentle reproof—or a short, religious lesson; and by some apt story, could illustrate what he said. All was well taken, and generally had its effect. In short, his company listened to him, and was delighted with him on every subject—they were entertained and instructed—they loved him like a father; and yet they all stood greatly in awe of him. With the character of this very amiable man, Mr. Mowbray was always extremely pleased; and wished to imitate him in this social intercourse with his neighbours, which he thought might be made

so conducive to their improvement. But he found it required peculiar talents; and talents which he did not possess. He made two or three aukward attempts; but was mortified to find, he could neither make his conversation agreeable to them, nor check such little indecencies, as it was not proper for him to witness. He gave up the business, therefore, as a matter which he was not qualified to undertake; and resolved to pursue his clerical duty in modes better accommodated to his genius.—It is a great part of wisdom to determine, in what way a man's usefulness may best be employed.

While Mr. Mowbray was thus endeavouring to do all the good he could in his curacy, a benefice fell vacant, which his friends thought he had interest to procure. He had scruples however on this head. He did not like the confidence of a man's putting himself forward to obtain a benefice. He thought it was saying in other words, *I am qualified for it, and am able to discharge it.* On the other hand, when a man only *accepts* what is *offered*, he does not pledge himself so roundly to discharge the duties of it. Part of the weight rests upon the person who promoted him; though he

does not, on that consideration, think himself less bound to exert his best endeavours.

Mr. Mowbray was soon, however, relieved from the solicitations of his friends on one hand, and his own scruples on the other. By an application, unknown to him, from an old college friend, another living was *offered* to him, which he accepted without scruple.

The first difficulty that occurred to him on this change in his situation, was in the matter of dilapidations. When the executor of a clergyman is in affluent circumstances, there is no occasion to be very ceremonious. But when a poor widow is left in indigence, the case is often a hard one. Mr. Mowbray indeed thought, that the widows of clergymen were often treated with too much severity on these occasions. In the hour of affliction, they cannot be well attentive to matters of interest; and advantage hath sometimes been taken of this circumstance. Usages in different countries depend often on precedents. In Norfolk, particularly, dilapidation-demands were become so exorbitant, that a subscription was talked of to enable widows to defend their rights. Mr. Mowbray, however, had not the most distant idea of

carrying matters to extremity. He was only concerned how to keep his generosity to the widow within the bounds of justice to himself. She was left but in low circumstances; and his own were far from ample. The parsonage-house too had been much neglected, and was in very bad repair. But though he could not be so generous, as he wished; yet he deducted one third from his surveyor's estimate: and when cavils were unhandsomely made even to this estimate, moderate as it was, he was so far from taking offence at the want of candour in those, with whom he was concerned, that he at once gave up the articles in dispute; and would settle no accounts, till the widow was fully satisfied. In some degree, indeed, he was selfish in what he had done; though it was a commendable selfishness: he wished the first impression he gave, on entering his parish, might be that of moderation.

As soon as he was well settled, he found new difficulties. He had many wealthy neighbours, with all of whom he wished to live on the best terms; and yet he was more afraid now, than when he was a curate, of too social an intercourse with them. He thought it would agree

neither with his time, nor his pocket. When he was a curate, his dining, now and then, with a neighbour, was of no consequence. But now, when he was settled in a house of his own, he could not properly accept an invitation, without giving one in return; and all that troublesome, and expensive reciprocation of jovial eating, and drinking, he dreaded. He declined, therefore, the first invitation to dinner, which he received; and, instead of dining, begged leave to wait on the family at tea. It was soon understood, that he did not chuse to dine abroad; and as he went freely among his neighbours on other occasions, and was always glad to meet them at tea in his own house, he gave no offence.

As he became more acquainted with his parish, he found many sectaries in it—presbyterians—quakers—and methodists,—with all of whom he endeavoured to live a peaceful life.

There were many things in them all which he liked. The *presbyterians*, he thought, came so near the church, that it was a pity they could not unite. Nay, he went farther, and thought many of their objections to the establishment were really well-founded: though

at the same time, they were hardly, he thought, sufficient to occasion a separation. In civil matters, he owned, he thought government pressed too hard upon them. He did not pretend to much judgment in political matters, but as far as he could judge, the test-act appeared to him an unnecessary restraint.

In the *quaker*, he admired his christian deportment—his gentle, inoffensive manners—and his charitable disposition to people of all religious persuasions: though, at the same time, he could not reconcile himself to his opinions about the sacrament—about divine worship—and other points, which he thought unscriptural.

Of the *methodists* in general, he had a very good opinion. He saw a zeal in them, which he thought truly christian; and he heard, with pleasure, of great reformations often wrought by that zeal among colliers, manufacturers, and other abandoned people. He allowed that many of the rigid professors of this sect held opinions which he thought not only unscriptural, but of bad tendency—as what some of them called the doctrine of *assurance*, which taught that christians might arrive at a *sinless state*—such also

was the doctrine of *predestination*, which many of them held, as it appeared to him, in a very unscriptural sense. He was hurt also, by the uncharitable opinions, which they often entertained of those who did not believe as they did. Their high notions of faith, compared with good works, he considered also as unscriptural. They seemed to consider the doctrines of christianity, as *ends* in themselves, rather than as the *means* to restore man to that state of purity, which he had lost; and which restoration seems to be the great purpose of the gospel. These opinions however, which appeared to him as erroneous, related only to a few. All those pious men, who were branded with the name of methodists, because their lives were strictly christian, he held in the highest esteem: and always felt himself greatly *flattered*, if the expression may be allowed, when he himself was called a methodist, as he knew he sometimes was.

Thus, by endeavouring to fix his eye on what he saw most valuable in each, and not dwelling on any of their opinions, however unscriptural he might suppose them, he gave offence to none, and made himself a kind of central point

to all; each thinking him more their friend, than they thought each other.

His next great difficulty arose about tithes—that great object of contest between the clergy and laity. Though the clergyman has the same right to his tithes, which the landlord has to his rent, (the same law giving a title to each) and though the farmer takes his land at an under-price, because of this yearly demand upon it; yet still, as the value of tithes increases with the farmer's expense, and labour, it is an invidious mode of maintaining the clergy, if it could be removed; and is certainly a continual call upon them for all their prudence, moderation, and management. They have their own popularity in the parish to consider—their own interest—and, at the same time, that of their successors, for which they are in trust. Too great strictness, where the increase arises from the farmer's exertions, would not only be unpopular, but it would be wrong in itself. In his own labour, and improvements, his own gain should surely preponderate. In the proper adjustment of this matter lies one of the clergyman's great difficulties. When the tithes are greatly underlet, no minister, who values his

usefulness in a parish, will attempt to raise them to their full extent: and yet it may be right, with great caution, to raise them a little. If the tithes be rectorial, and much undervalued, there is perhaps no harm in the minister's taking them for a year, or two, into his own hands, and by that means shewing the farmer how much under their value they were rated. By this he might raise them a little without murmuring: and if he can do it, the best way perhaps is, to let each farmer rent his own.—But if the tithes be vicarial, the minister cannot so well ascertain their value by taking them into his own hands. They consist of such a number of petty articles, that the collection of them in kind, would both be very vexatious to the farmer, and very troublesome to himself. Mr. Mowbray's tithes were vicarial; and he was well assured the composition for them was much under their value. But nothing could have tempted him to ascertain their value by taking them into his own hands. He had an instance, in a neighbouring parish, of its mischievous effects. The vicar, disagreeing with his parishioners on this head, determined to gather his tithes himself. He built a dairy, in

the first place, and fitted up other conveniences to receive his tithe. This was a great expense at the outset. He was at great expense likewise in collecting the various articles, of which his tithe consisted. In this odious business he was vexed also with a thousand tricks, which the farmers continually put upon him, and which he could not prevent. The sale of his commodities was another source of difficulty to him.—And lastly, the greater part of his parishioners forsook his church, declaring they could not believe a man could have any regard for their spiritual welfare, who had so little concern for their temporal quiet. In short, he found that to set his face against a whole parish was a very arduous attempt, and never likely to succeed. Having gotten, therefore, nothing but mischief himself, by the vexation he had occasioned to others; and having entirely lost all respect, and influence in his parish, he was obliged, at length, to sit down quietly with his loss; and glad to put things again on their old footing.

Mr. Mowbray, however, did not need examples of this kind to teach him a more moderate conduct. He valued the love of his parish much more than the increase of his tithes: and

resolved, if he could not raise them with the consent of his parishioners, to leave the matter undone. He knew his tithes were undervalued, and that his predecessor was about to raise his composition at the time of his death. All this he occasionally mentioned in conversation to the heads of the parish; and, after he had been a while settled among them, and had given them various instances of his moderation, he reminded them, that potatoes which were come much into tillage, had been adjudged a vicarial tithe; and that as provisions were become dearer, and they had a better market for their corn and cattle, he doubted not, but they would think it reasonable, that some little proportion of that increased value should be added to his tithes. Otherwise, the same cause, which increased their profits, would only increase his expenses. He then called the parish together in vestry; shewed them his books—and made them an offer, that if they would raise his composition to the moderate sum he mentioned, far below the real value of his tithes, and collect them for him, so as to give him no trouble about them, they might make the adjustment themselves: and he promised, on his part, never to

raise them again, while he lived. The parish owned the conditions were very reasonable, and accepted them. Only, as they foresaw there would be obstinate people, he must engage, they told him, to stand by them.

The caution was not unnecessary. A neighbouring farmer, who had cultivated a great quantity of potatoes, was raised by the parish somewhat more than the rest, which he refused to pay, alledging that the minister had no right to the tithe of potatoes. Mr. Mowbray assured him it was an adjudged case, and did what he could to persuade him not to be obstinate; but in vain. So he was under the necessity of employing an attorney to commence a suit against him. The farmer finding the matter grew serious, consulted his lawyer, and by his advice made up the affair as quickly as he could. Mr. Mowbray told him, that as he had refused his offer, he was not included in the promise he had made to the other farmers of not raising his tithe. So that, as I am convinced, said he, you are rated much too low, I must insist upon double the sum, at which they rated you. The farmer was very sorry for what had passed—begged it might never be remembered again; and

that he might not be singled out in any particular way in the parish.—On such a submission his request was easily granted.

Another person in the parish thought himself much aggrieved by this new composition, and therefore refused to pay it. Mr. Mowbray told him, he had every reason to believe the composition was fair, and equal: and as the parish in vestry had made it for him, he must stand by them. But, said he, if you think yourself aggrieved, you have your redress in your own hand; and may insist upon my taking my tithes in kind. You will then have strict justice done you; for you cannot, in that case, pay more than the law allows. The farmer could not possibly object to that; and, taking it for granted, that the vicar would not go on with such a troublesome business, informed him, soon afterwards, that a tithe-pig was ready to be delivered. Mr. Mowbray, who was easily able to manage one man, though he could not the whole parish, sent his clerk with a note, informing the farmer he had authorised the bearer to receive the pig, and all his other tithes, as they became due.—That, as to his garden, he would put him to no vexation in drawing the

tithe himself; but should appoint some poor person in his neighbourhood, to whom the farmer should give what, on his honour, he thought was the tenth part of its produce. The farmer, who was a head-strong man, and had acted all this silly part, rather out of a bravado, than through any real sense of injury, seeing the vicar was in earnest, begged he would accept the pig; and that nothing more might be said about the matter.—Thus, Mr. Mowbray got this troublesome affair of his tithes settled; and, without forfeiting the love, and esteem of his parish, made more of them, than if he had raised them much more considerably, and collected them himself. The little opposition he had met with, and his steady conduct in return, was well taken by the parish in general; as, in fact, the opposition was rather against the farmers, who had settled the tithe, than against the vicar himself.

Soon after he had settled this difficulty, he met with another, which was wholly unlooked for. The time of the general election drew on; in which, as he never troubled his head with politics, he determined to take no part. It happened, however, that one of the candidates was

favoured by his patron; and, on the strength of that, waited on Mr. Mowbray, to request the favour of his vote and interest. Mr. Mowbray had no personal acquaintance with him; but, from his general character, believed him to be a debauched man, without any sense of religion. Such a man was very unlikely to meet encouragement from a person of Mr. Mowbray's strict way of thinking. He received, therefore, such an answer, as he could only interpret into a denial. Surprized at this reception, the candidate went immediately to Sir W. B. the patron. Sir W. who was much hurt at the thing, only replied, that Mr. Mowbray was unacquainted with the world; but he would talk to him on the subject. It was rather indelicate in Sir W. to urge a request of this kind on a man, who was under obligations to him. Mr. Mowbray, however, still persisted; he could not, he said, in conscience, give his vote to place any person in a public station, of whom he had a bad opinion.—Sir W. left him, with some little heat. It was the first favour, he said, he had ever asked of him; and should be the last. —Mr. Mowbray saw it was in vain to say more at that time; but the next morning he waited

upon him, and told him, how much he was hurt with the appearance of ingratitude, which, he begged might not be laid to his charge. Points of conscience, he said, superseded all other obligations: and the trust reposed by the country in every voter, he owned, appeared to him as a matter of that kind. He did not care to enter much into the character of the person in question; but he insinuated, that a man, who had forfeited the public esteem, was but ill-qualified to be placed in the legislature of a country. Sir W. who was, at the bottom, a man of virtue, sense, and candour, heard him with great patience; and owned what he said was very just. In a question of bribery, he allowed, it made little difference, whether a man voted for a pot of beer, a sum of money, or to favour a friend. In a few days after, he met Mr. Mowbray accidentally, and shaking him by the hand, I have been thinking, said he, of what passed between us last Wednesday; and I candidly acknowledge I have been led away too much, in these matters, by party. I have received, however, a note this morning from your worthy friend, which informs me, he declines giving any farther trouble to the county. This

I consider as a very fortunate circumstance: for I had begun thoroughly to repent of the encouragement I had given him; and, for the future, shall be more cautious how I enter into engagements of this kind again.

Among other difficulties, which perplexed Mr. Mowbray, the choice of a proper mode of preaching was not one of the least. The difficulty lay in adapting his discourses to the lower people, and yet forming them so as not to disgust the higher part of his audience. The parish-minister, he thought, whose congregation commonly consisted of both kinds of people, lay under a great difficulty on this head. There seemed to him to be two great inlets of divine instruction—one through the *imagination*, the other through *reason*. The uninformed mind received its confined knowledge chiefly through the *imagination*: the cultivated mind, through *reason*. And, as the imagination of those who cannot reason, is, perhaps, stronger than in those who can, the enthusiastic preacher, who addresses himself to the imagination of low people, has often a surprizing command over their passions. At the same time, such an address to an enlightened audience, would only

raise disgust. By telling a plain, ignorant, but well-disposed man, of Christ's sufferings for his sake, and dwelling pathetically upon them, you may perhaps excite in him a great fervor of devotion. But rhapsody will not convince. The enlightened mind, that wants conviction, requires evidence. Mr. Mowbray therefore thought the most generally useful way of preaching was to take plain subjects—chiefly evangelical—to explain them both by argument, and, when it could easily be done, by illustrations. But all argument he rejected, which he conceived was not intelligible to the lowest people. He was fond also of explaining scripture-stories, and examples, which he always thought were listened to with attention; and of making close applications to such particular characters, virtues, and vices, as he thought might produce the best effect.

The last difficulty, which perplexed the mind of this conscientious clergyman, was the management of his expenses. His income he considered as a trust, which it was his duty to employ to the best advantage. It was not large; but he had rendered it *certain*, which was a great help to a methodical distribution of it. Whe-

ther it was large, however, or small, was not the question; but whether he made a proper use of it, whatever it was. His expenses had three objects; his own maintenance; a little provision for casualties, and putting forward his family; and a fund for charity. His wife brought him a small fortune, which was settled upon her; and he wished to make, every year, a little addition to it; which, if God should spare him a few years, he hoped might answer all the moderate purposes he wished for his family. How much his economy in his private expenses enabled him to do on the other two heads, is surprizing. He now found the advantage of forming early habits of frugality. He had allowed himself a taste for expense in nothing. He gave no dinners. His table, though plentiful, was unacquainted with delicacies of any kind. Wine he considered as a cordial; not as an indulgence. Except, therefore, when a friend accidentally partook of his family-meal, his table was never arranged with bottles, and glasses. In his dress he was equally frugal. He was the plain clergyman, affecting nothing beyond the propriety, and decency, of his profession; and his wife, though always neat, was never fine. Three servants were all he wanted.

They were attached to him; and he thought nothing was lost in treating them kindly, and generously. As he seldom went abroad himself; and rarely, when he did go, took a servant with him, they had little intercourse with other servants; and were thus bred up in domestic habits. His whole income was together about £350 a year. As nearly as he could, he brought his household expenses within £200. One hundred he endeavoured to lay by for his family; and rarely spent less than the remaining £50, either in charity—or in little loans; or other benevolent purposes.

THE

CHARACTER OF A CLERGYMAN,

WHO MADE

A Conscience of nothing.

The character of a Clergyman, &c.

Mr. Simonds had raised a very large fortune in trade; and thinking it prudent to realize a part of his immense wealth, he purchased an estate in Somersetshire, to which was attached the advowson of a good living. He had three sons. As he proposed to make a family, he bred up the eldest to the respectable employment of a gentleman. The second, he placed in his own counting-house; and considering the living in Somersetshire as a good patrimony for Dick, the youngest, he sent him to be qualified for it at the university.

Dick, who had seen nothing of his father's serious attention to the important business of the counting-house; and had been a witness only of his looser hours of relaxation, had been taught,

from his infancy, to consider life merely as a scene of jollity; and carried these lively principles with him to college, where he soon obtained the title, in the language of that place, of a *buck of the first head.* His father, who was not himself very deep in religious studies, had no idea of the necessity of any thing to qualify his son for the church, but a degree at the university; and Dick himself hardly saw the necessity even of that.

Often would his tutor put good books into his hands;—exhort—threaten—and remind him of the disgrace that would ensue, when he came to take his degree. Dick was insensible to every honest motive; and had no idea of any disgrace, but that of flinching his glass.

At last, however, the time came, when he was to be examined for his degree. It was the same thing to Dick, in what art, or science, he was examined. He was equally prepared for all. The schools, in the mean time, were filled with gownsmen, attending the examination of so eminent a scholar as Dick was universally known to be; and much amusement was expected.—Nor were they disappointed. At every question Dick was either silent, or would sometimes mut-

ter some unintelligible nonsense, to make the examiner think he was answering: and when a horse laugh would burst out from the audience, on these occasions, Dick, to shew his undaunted spirit, to any of his acquaintance, whom he saw near him, would squint aside behind his hand—loll out his tongue, and make grimaces. In the end, though the examining-master handled him with the utmost tenderness, he could not possibly sign his testimonial. Many people thought they observed marks of shame on Dick's countenance. He had often, it is true, been engaged in more shameful scenes, without betraying any sense of confusion; but he had always that enlivening maxim in his view, *defendit numerus*. But here he was exalted aloft in a desk; placed above the crowd; and had not a single friend to back him, or take any share in his calamity.—So that now, probably, for the first time, he shrunk from himself. His shame, however, lasted not long. The next jovial evening washed it away; when Dick was very eloquent in his remarks on the snivelling fellows, who had examined him. By good fortune, however, and a happy collusion, and shuffle between him, and a regent master of his own stamp, he got

his testimonial signed a few weeks afterwards, and obtained a batchelor's degree.—With the same good fortune too, he became at length a master of arts.—Thus Dick closed his academical studies; and the ease with which he finished them, and got through all his difficulties, encouraged him to go on, as he had begun; and convinced him, how unnecessary it was to disturb himself with books, or any idea of improvement.

Soon, however, another grand affair—his ordination—was coming on; which rather gave him a pang, when in any unhappy moment he thought of what had so lately past. He hoped, however, that his good fortune, on which he entirely depended, would carry him through this affair, as it had done through the other: so, with that happy temper which always possessed him, when he looked into the future, he made himself perfectly easy about the matter.

Here, however, he found an unexpected check. The bishop told him, that his chaplain, who examined him, had given him so unfavourable an account of his proficiency, both in human learning, and in divinity, that before he ordain-

ed him, he must ask him a few questions himself. The first question the bishop asked him, was, how many Evangelists there were? Dick was not so ignorant, as never to have heard of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; but unhappily he had never heard of them under the title of Evangelists. The bishop gave him time to recollect himself; but finding the question was too deep for him, he told him, he should not trouble him any farther at present: but advised him to read such, and such books; and to come to him again at his next year's ordination.

This was the heaviest stroke poor Dick had ever yet received; for the living was now become vacant, and he had been to visit it, and found it situated in a pleasant, sporting country, and near an excellent pack of hounds. The ill-usage, however, which he had received from the surly old bishop, as he called him, had so ruffled him, that, notwithstanding all the prospect of happiness which his new situation promised him, he wrote to his father, that he had taken a dislike to the church, and rather wished to go into the army.

The old gentleman, however, did not so readily

drop the affair. He prudently considered, that not only a certain family-provision was lost, but a new one was to be made. He immediately, therefore, hit upon a proper way to set all this crooked affair to rights. No man knew better than he did, how to manage an emergence, as it arose, or to get more obliquely to the weak side of those with whom he had any wry piece of business to transact. He happened, fortunately, at that time, to be deeply concerned with the minister in a new loan, which was then raising for the current year: and having found out a certain bishop, who was in daily hope of a rich translation, he applied to the minister,—told him, he had bought a living for his son, but the young man having been rather a little idle at college, he was afraid the bishop might make objection. He begged the minister, therefore, would be so good as to interfere; and hint to his lordship, that he wished him to pass matters over as easily as he could, and ordain his son;—that no time was to be lost, as the living was now vacant. The minister was glad to oblige Mr. Simonds, in so trifling a matter, and engaged in it with great readiness. A sham-title was easily procured; and the good bishop, making no hesitation, as the young

man, he said, was so well recommended, ordained him, within the compass of a week, both a deacon, and a priest.

All difficulties, therefore, being now removed, his father presented him to the living; and he became a pastor to a numerous flock.

Having taken possession of the living, his first concern respected the spiritual discharge of it. With this view he laid out a few pounds in purchasing a complete collection of Trusler's M. S. Sermons; which, in the way of literature, was all the reading he wanted. Having thus provided for the spiritual sustenance of his parish, his next thought was for himself. He filled his cellar with a parcel of choice wines, in which his father, who intended, now and then, to spend a week with him, very kindly assisted. Having purchased also a couple of good hunters, and two or three staunch pointers, he was now, in his own opinion, completely equipped for a country rector. How well he discharged the detail of his clerical duties, need not here be mentioned. The reader is by this time apprized, that if nobody troubled him with difficulties, he was himself inclined to make difficulties of nothing.

A DEFENCE

OF

THE POLITE ARTS;

IN A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

The Lord Treasurer Burleigh

AND

Sir Philip Sidney.

Religion does not censure, or exclude
Unnumber'd pleasures, harmlessly pursued.
To teach the canvas innocent deceit;
Or lay the landscape on the snowy sheet;
Are pleasing arts, pursued without a crime;
And leave no stain upon the wing of Time.

COWPER.

A Dialogue, &c. between the Lord-Treasurer Burleigh, and Sir Philip Sidney.

The Lord-treasurer Burleigh had long promised a visit, at his first leisure, to the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton. No man was a greater slave to business than he was; nor allowed himself less relaxation. However, in the latter end of the summer, either of 1581, or of the following year, when he was not particularly pressed with business, he indulged himself in this excursion, having long thought of it with pleasure. One inducement, was to see Stonehenge, which he wished to examine; and which the earl informed him, was within a morning's ride of his house.

At this time, Sir Philip Sidney, whose sister the Earl of Pembroke had married, was on a

visit at Wilton. He had retired thither in a kind of disgrace. Some angry words having arisen about a mere trifle at tennis, between him and Edward Vere, earl of Oxford, the affair was brought before the Queen; and Sir Philip thinking himself ill used by the award, which her Majesty had given against him, had left the court in disgust, with a resolution never to go near it again. This, however, was the resolution only of a young man of keen sensibility. It was Queen Elizabeth's policy, often to subdue the haughty spirits of her young courtiers; and when she had sufficiently humbled them, she would favour them again with a gracious message. At this time, however, Sir Philip had not digested the affront, and resolved to have nothing more to do with courts and courtiers, but to give himself up to an elegant retirement.

It was impossible that a man of such eminence, as sir Philip Sidney, could have escaped the notice of Lord Burleigh; but as their modes of life and connections had been very different, the one having lived chiefly among statesmen, the other among men of wit, fashion, and military command; the treasurer had had little opportunity of

forming any acquaintance with this accomplished gentleman. From the intercourse, however, which he now had with him, he was surprised to find in a man, so formed for active life, and qualified to shine in the gayest circles, a mind stored with various kinds of knowledge, and qualified equally to converse with the philosopher, the statesman, and the man of the world.* The treasurer found him also well informed in the interest, and connections of the several states of Europe; and often said, he obtained many hints, and curious observations from him which he had met with nowhere else. From him, too, he received the best account of those horrid machinations, which brought on the dreadful massacre of St. Bartholomew. Sir Philip, who had been many years abroad, happened to be at Paris at the time of that infernal affair; the fatal effects of which, indeed, he narrowly escaped himself, by flying for refuge to the house of the English ambassador. And though before so wise, and old a minister, as Lord Burleigh, Sir

* Some late writers, particularly Mr. Walpole, have spoken very slightly of Sir Philip Sidney; perhaps not on sufficient grounds; others, however, have represented him as a most accomplished gentleman: and in this light I chuse to consider him, as I am not at all inquiring into his real character.

Philip was cautious, and diffident, in all he said yet the other plainly saw, from what he did say, that he knew much more on every subject, than he discovered. In short, the lord treasurer was so much pleased with his new acquaintance, that, during the time he spent at Wilton, he contrived to have as much of his company, as he could obtain.

Wilton house was then, as every great house ought to be, the mansion of perfect ease, and liberty. Every guest was master of his own time. At eight in the morning, and at six in the evening, the chapel bell rang, as was customary in noblemen's houses at that time; and it was rather remarked, if any company in the house who were not known to be otherwise engaged, made a practise of omitting to appear at prayers. The Earl of Pembroke was a serious, at least a decent man; and the countess, Sir Philip's sister, was a lady of great piety. The heads of the family, therefore, being thus regular, an habitual regularity naturally ran through the several departments of it. After morning prayers, or before, if the company pleased, they found a great variety of cold provisions, hams, fowls, and pasties, according to the manner of the time, set out for breakfast in a parlour;

but they were not confined to an hour; for the table stood open, and accessible till ten o'clock, with the attendance of two servants, always waiting in the anti-chamber. At twelve, the great buttery bell, sounding over all the grounds, gave notice, that it wanted just an hour to dinner. It was generally expected that all the guests, then in the house, should meet together at that meal. But there was no restraint. If any were riding out, visiting in the neighbourhood, or otherwise engaged, it was the custom of the house to send an apology on paper, which was put under the earl's plate at dinner. Thus, all guests being entirely at liberty, Wilton House was considered by every one, who was invited to it, not so much as a visited place, as a settled home.

The day before Lord Burleigh intended to leave Wilton, he was walking in the garden, about six in the morning, (for he was always a man of early hours) and found himself suddenly at the door of a little retired summer house, where Sir Philip Sidney was sitting with his books and papers about him.* On seeing

* Sir Philip was at this time amusing himself with writing his Arcadia. He generally wrote a sheet every morning, which he gave to his sister at noon.

him, Lord Burleigh made many apologies for interrupting, though undesignedly, his morning studies, and was about to retire; but sir Philip, being glad of every opportunity of conversing with so wise and experienced a statesman, assured him his employment was of no consequence; and if his Lordship would accept his company, he should be glad to attend him through the remainder of his walk.

To tell you the truth, (said Lord Burleigh) I have walked as long as my old legs will carry me, and I was seeking here for a place of rest; so that, if you will give me leave, I will call your civility hospitality, and take my seat with you.

Two such men could not be at a loss for topics of conversation. The first that arose, was the wonderful work of Stonehenge, which Lord Burleigh had carefully examined in Sir Philip's company the day before. They made many conjectures about it; but as the more enlightened antiquarians, of these times, have varied so much in their opinions respecting that curious work of antiquity, we cannot suppose the conjectures of these gentlemen, learned and ingenious as they were, could be of much

value; in fact, they were not worth recording. Having exhausted this subject, they were led from Stonehenge to a review of barbarous times; from thence, the conversation led to the rise and fall of empires;—the effect which religion, trade, arts, and sciences, have upon them; and how far each might be carried, before it arrived at its declining period. For any one of them (Lord Burleigh observed) might be carried too far; religion itself often deviating into fanaticism, and superstition.

During the course of this conversation, Lord Burleigh had thrown out some disrespectful expressions against the polite arts; and had spoken of them as the sources of luxury, and the ready means of injuring the morals of a nation.

Sir Philip, who greatly admired, and was not unversed in all the polite arts, considering the day in which he lived, was rather hurt at hearing the treasurer treat them in so disrespectful a manner; and shewed an inclination to defend them from, what he thought, so unjust a charge; but Lord Burleigh put him in mind, that it was then too late in the morning to call so copious a question. However, said he, I have

no objection to hear what you can say in their defence, when we can command a longer hour. They agreed, therefore, to return to the house, and immediately refresh themselves with a breakfast, that they might, after chapel, avoid the interruption of other company, and pursue their conversation in the park. I shall only beg (said Lord Burleigh) that you will carry me to a place where I may, now and then, sit down; but as the day is pleasant, the stump of a tree, or a log of wood will serve me for a seat.

I have ventured, (said Sir Philip) as they walked into the park, after chapel, I fear, on a presumptuous task—to defend matters of mere amusement, on moral, and political ground, against a person of your Lordship's experience in government.

Make no apology, (replied Lord Burleigh) I beseech you, on that head. To tell you the truth, I have never considered the subject myself with the least attention; indeed it never fell in my way. I just threw out what I said, rather from the casual remarks I have made in reading history, than from any reasoning of my own. Our gracious sovereign has never shewn much affection for the arts; especially

for such as are imitative; if she had, I should have considered the subject more attentively. Besides, you stand here as an advocate, the arts are your clients; you have undertaken to defend their cause. For myself, I am neither judge nor advocate; but a simple auditor. However, I will so far do justice to your argument, that if any thing objectionable strike me, I will mention it, were it only to give you the opportunity of answering.

In the first place then, (said Sir Philip) I think your Lordship observed, that luxury was the offspring of the polite arts; intimating, I presume, that the parents, and the offspring, should both be banished together. And so, perhaps, should I decree, if this legitimacy could be clearly made out. But I suspect it cannot. You would, perhaps, stare, if I should lay all this illustrious progeny at your Lordship's own door; and yet I think they have some claim upon you. By noble efforts you disarm our enemies. By wise regulations you encourage our trade. And what is to be the end of all this; but that the people should become rich! And when they are rich, what are they to do with their riches?

Rich, answered Lord Burleigh, I have no idea of seeing the nation rich beyond its necessities. My ideas are more moderate; I wish the people only to be happy, and secure. I should wish to see the scriptural adage fulfilled, and to have every man eat his bread *under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree.* I desire no farther happiness for them.

Give me leave then, my good, lord to say, (replied Sir Philip,) that if you mean only to procure a competence for the good people of England, I think I could point out many measures you have taken, which are extremely injudicious; and which (through your lordship's egregious mistakes in government) are leading the nation far wide of what you so piously intend.

Well, well, said Lord Burleigh, (arching his right eye-brow in a manner he sometimes did when he was pleased) let future ministers look to that; and when the dangerous time you threaten us with arrives, let them guard against it by good sumptuary laws.

However, for argument's sake, (resumed Sir Philip,) let us consider this dangerous crisis arrived; and the people of England, in general,

prosperous, and rich, beyond what your lordship's fatherly care designs for them. How is this money to be consumed? the wise ministers, of the present day, may not be alive to make good sumptuary laws: and perhaps no sumptuary laws could restrain exorbitant wealth within the bounds of moderation. Like a great river, its current cannot be restrained. If you stop it in one part, it overflows in another.—Now, among the various channels of abundant wealth, I assert, there is none more innocent in itself, or less injurious to others, than that, which leads to the encouragement of the elegant arts. Where wealth abounds, (said lord Burleigh,) poverty and ignorance will also abound; and the man of large possessions may always find, through these channels, a full gratification to a benevolent heart, if he possess one.

It is true, (said Sir Philip;) but in a rich nation, wealth will naturally overflow not only in charity, but in various channels of self-indulgence. It cannot be avoided; and, I believe, those in which the arts flow, are, of all others, the least injurious.—Nay, I go farther; and think I may assert, that in a wealthy community, men of large fortune may, properly, within certain limits en-

courage arts, and artists; and indeed ought to do it.

It is an easy matter, my dear sir, (replied Lord Burleigh) for an ingenious man to dress up an argument. More than once have I heard a certain lord, whom you and I both know, remarkable for the brilliancy of his wit, descant so speciously in debate, as to draw over many to his opinion: when some grave person, on the other side, by producing a stubborn fact or two, hath entirely overset him.—May I take upon me to represent that grave person; and put you in mind, how often the ancients, those great masters of political knowledge, speak, from facts and experience, of the arts as introducing luxury, and ruining states. If I had my books at hand, I could be copious in my quotations. But your memory, I doubt not, is better than mine, and can make up the deficiency.

I remember, indeed, many passages (answered Sir Philip) in which luxury and the arts are huddled together by ancient authors; and confounded, perhaps, as equal instruments of decay in states. But the expressions, I believe, are every where casual, vague, and indefinite. I never remember an *argument*, on

this subject made out, and see no ground at all, on this head, to stigmatize the arts as the aggressors in this mischief, or even as the abettors of it. I humbly, therefore, conceive that (if your Lordship will allow me to call these *stubborn facts* in question) the authors, who hold such language, mistake the *effect* for the cause. If we deduce the arts from their origin, and examine their progress, we may easily, indeed, suppose them to *accompany* a falling empire; and, for aught I know, to be sometimes one of the *prognostics* of it; but how they can be the *cause* of the mischief, I cannot, in the least, discover. The wealth of a nation, no doubt, is the great agent in this affair. It gives birth to the arts; and, by degrees, through a variety of self-indulgences, enfeebles the people, and brings on ruin. The progress seems to be this,—When a nation becomes rich, various modes of consuming its riches will certainly be devised. At first, these modes of expense will be awkward, inelegant, and ostentatious; but yet not less corrupting, as far as they extend, than the dreaded contagion of the arts. By degrees the pomp of expense gives way to convenience; the table groaning under a load of provision,

and the numerous bands of dependents, which now wait, in troublesome parade, upon their lord, will probably soon be discarded. In their room, the house may become better furnished, and the comforts of life better understood. From conveniencies, men will naturally look forward to elegancies. The arts will begin gradually to appear. At first they may be little encouraged, and make but a slow progress. They will be ungainly in themselves; and, as they will be little admired, there will be little in them that is admirable. By degrees, however, they will attract notice. Taste will refine: and they will become one great channel of the overflowing wealth of the nation. I speak from what history tells us has been the case in other nations. But in this progress, they cannot, I think, be called the cause of luxury. The companions of it we may allow them to be. But national wealth appears to be the prolific mother both of luxury, and of them.—I do not, you see, my good lord, enter into a definition of luxury; nor pretend to point out, how and where it makes its inroads into the morals of a people. I allow the fact, that luxury has certainly a tendency to debauch and corrupt. All I pretend to say is, that

the elegant arts are so far from promoting the mischievous consequences of wealth; that they rather retard them, by offering the most innocent channel, into which its superfluity can be poured.—I suppose your lordship will hardly allow me to call the nation, at present, in a state of luxury? At least, if the flourishing of the elegant arts be the criterion of luxury, we seem to be at a sufficient distance from it: and yet, though the nation, in general, may be free from luxury, the rich may profusely expend their wealth on objects much less pure, and much more seducing, than in the encouragement of the polite arts. What does your lordship think of that wonderful expense, which, half-a-dozen years ago, engaged the attention of the whole nation, at Kenelworth castle?* So ostentatious a way of consuming treasure, calling the country, far and wide, to be witnesses of every mode of prodigality, and senseless profusion, is, in my opinion, much more injurious to national manners, than twice the sum expended upon ingenious painters, statuaries, and architects.

* Where the Earl of Leicester gave a most sumptuous entertainment to Queen Elizabeth, in the summer of the year 1575.

You see I speak very freely of a relation of my own,* of whom, to say the truth, I am not over proud; but I know I speak to ears accustomed to hear many things, which go no farther. A proper respect to a sovereign, all subjects ought to pay: but, perhaps, neither the sovereign, who enriches the subject, I will not say whether fully deserving, with so much prodigality, nor the subject, who shews his gratitude to the sovereign in so unexampled a mode of expense, deserves to be mentioned, with the highest marks of our approbation. I have been credibly informed, my lord, that twenty thousand pounds did not pay the expense of the entertainment of those few days. It might have fitted out a navy.†

These last remarks came so home to the good treasurer, that he knew not how to parry them. In his own mind he was entirely of Sir Philip's opinion. He was ever an enemy to all those

* The Earl of Leicester was uncle to Sir Philip Sidney.

† It is plain, Sir Philip had not yet digested the affront he had received at court, from the acrimony, with which he mentions the affair of Kenelworth-castle. If he had, he would have spared the obsequious Leicester on this occasion, for the sake of his royal mistress, who was so much gratified by Leicester's profusion.

wanton modes of consuming treasures, which tend only to raise emulation in the minds of men in matters of expense;—to give them a quick relish for shew and pageantry;—to set before them a style of prodigal amusement;—and, in short, to corrupt and vitiate their manners. On the other hand, he was too good a courtier to find fault with any thing, which his gracious sovereign had countenanced. He satisfied himself, therefore, with saying, in the court-tainted language of those days, that subjects were not always proper judges of the actions, and intentions of princes; which were sometimes involved in that mysterious obscurity, which concealed them from too close an inspection. However, said he, (artfully changing the topic) though I am not so well acquainted with the genealogy of the elegant arts, as to know whether they are the parents, or the offspring of luxury; yet you will give me leave to observe, they must naturally be pernicious in a state, as they detach the minds of men from more useful pursuits—as they soften and enervate their manners—and, by thus unbracing their active powers, disqualify them for the severer offices of the state.

This is a heavy charge, (replied Sir Philip)

and the more difficult to be combated, as we must reason rather from theory, than experience. We have great statesmen amongst us; and, I doubt not, good soldiers—but we have neither arts, nor men of taste to appreciate arts. How our great men, therefore, might have been corrupted, if they had, unhappily, fallen in the way of these seductions, remains only matter of speculation. But if your Lordship will allow me to follow the appeal, which you just made to antiquity, I doubt not, but many encouragers of the arts might be produced, who were, at the same time, men of great application, and ability in affairs of state. What does your Lordship think of Pericles, among the Greeks—and of Lucullus, among the Romans? I never heard it suggested, that either the political, or the military character of these great men, was injured by their attachment to the arts.

Two or three instances, (replied Lord Burleigh) drawn out of an age, prove little. We read also, you know, of an honest rough Roman, who told those about him, who were handling, carelessly, some old statues, taken among other plunder, "that if they damaged any of

them, he would make them replace it with a new one." My argument proceeds on the *natural effect* which the arts have, and must have, like all other frivolous amusements, in enervating the mind.

I think, my good lord, (said Sir Philip) you should not blend the arts with *frivolous amusements*, till we have investigated the question, whether they really belong to that family. If we can separate them from this connection, I hope they will be entitled to a little more of your esteem. I suppose you will allow, that some relaxation is necessary to people of every degree; the head that thinks, and the hand that labours, must have some little time to recruit their diminished powers. I have heard (added Sir Philip) with an air of modest archness, that your Lordship, now and then, condescends to class your medals and coins; and inquire into matters of antiquity.

Aye, aye, (said the treasurer) if the private hours of us busy people be narrowly pried into, we shall often, I doubt not, be found triflers, as well as others. However, I hope you will not consider my endeavouring to get together a little series of English history, from our ancient

coins, and other vestiges of antiquity, as a mere trifling amusement, but as having something solid and useful in it.

Sir Philip was going to reply, that nothing was more common than to deceive ourselves in these cases, by glossing over with the name of *utility*, what, in fact, we take up merely as an amusement; but as he was a man of strict decorum, and propriety of manners, he checked any such observation as not sufficiently respectful to a person of Lord Burleigh's age, wisdom, and dignity. He contented himself, therefore, with saying, that as his Lordship had put in his caveat against considering the study of coins and medals as an amusement, he should accept it—and, in the course of his argument, leave it out of the question, as he meant chiefly to consider the arts in the light of amusement. Sir Philip then ran over various kinds of amusement; and classing such as belonged to the body, under the head of *exercise*, he left them out of his present argument. I have now, said he, only to do with the amusements of the mind; and as your Lordship was pleased, just now, to use the word *frivolous*, I shall take it up; and making use of it as a term of distinction

among the several sorts of amusement, shall endeavour to shew, which of them may properly be called *frivolous*; and which of them may aspire to a higher denomination.

That there is a difference in amusements, as there is in employments, we must all acknowledge. As the hand which holds the plough, is inferior to the head which governs the state; so in amusements, such as we fly to for mere relaxation, are certainly of a nature very inferior to those which are addressed to the finer feelings of the mind. Among the former, I rank carding, dicing, primero,* and other petty games; among the latter music, perhaps, poetry, painting, statuary, and architecture; all of which are calculated to make pleasing impressions on the imagination, or to adorn, and polish life. Many of them, too, make such impressions as, though not absolutely virtuous in themselves, are, I think, nearly allied to virtue, both from their innocence, and from their close connection, often, with virtuous feelings, and virtuous employments.

I do not clearly understand (said Lord Bur-

* A game much played at in Sir Philip Sidney's time.

leigh) what you mean by these *virtuous feelings*. It does not readily occur to me, how the feelings, which arise from seeing limnings and images, can be very different from those, which arise from seeing pictured cards, or the dots of dice.

You have been so constantly engaged, my good lord, (replied Sir Philip) in the weighty affairs of government, that you have never had leisure to consider these things. But, I think, I can easily point out to you this difference. In the first place, (to proceed gradually with our argument) you must allow, that the mind is, at least, more rationally, and more agreeably employed in surveying the beauties of art, in which so many pleasing and elegant forms are represented, than in the dull monotony of turning up a five, or a six, or a ten. You see, I do not take your Lordship so literally, as if I thought you imagined the king of clubs as respectable a figure as a picture of Holbein's.

I know not (said Lord Burleigh) that you yet do justice to all I intended to say. For myself, I rarely play at cards*—never at dice; and,

* One should have supposed, that Lord Burleigh *never* played at cards; but Mr. Daines Barrington describes a pic-

therefore, may be as little informed on these subjects as on arts. But it appears to me, that the intricacies, and various incidents of a game at cards, or at chess, must be as amusing, as the *feelings* you speak of, which affect the man of taste.

This is the first time (said Sir Philip) that chess has been mentioned in our debate. Chess is certainly a most ingenious game, if it be not too severe for an amusement; it teaches a man to think, and to fix his thoughts;—it gives us a beautiful and moral picture of human life;—of the great advantages of prudence, conduct, and discretion. As I have a great respect, therefore, for chess, I must beg the same quarter for it, which I have just given to the study of coins, and medals. But for cards, as your Lordship, by acknowledging you are little acquainted with them, has withdrawn your protection from them, and they are fairly left in my hands, I am truly disposed to give them very little quarter. They seem to me to be indebted to an idle habit,

ture, sold in May 1785, at Greenwood's, in Leicester-Fields, which once belonged to Lord Falkland. In this picture, Lord Burleigh is represented playing at primero.

See ANN. REGISTER, 1786, p. 109.

for the possession they take of the mind; and to have as little rationality about them, as any amusement well can have. Such amusements are, in every sense of the word, *frivolous*, and can surely put in no claim to a comparison with such amusements as the elegant arts are able to furnish.

This, I own, (said Lord Burleigh,) appears to me rather as the language of prejudice. If a man be inslaved to his favourite amusement, beyond the line of his duty, it matters little, I think, whether it be to cards, or pictures. I exclude criminal excesses. I mean only, that in amusements, innocent in themselves, it is of little consequence, in which we *exceed*.*

I am sorry, (replied Sir Philip,) that in this view of the subject I am obliged also to differ from your Lordship. I think it may easily be made appear, that a love for the arts; even

* We need not wonder at Lord Burleigh's, gross conceptions on these subjects. We see the same misconceptions every day, where a subject has never been examined: and Lord Burleigh, with all his sense, knowledge, and abilities, must, *in this instance*, be considered (as he was totally void of all information) merely as a person with the crude ideas of ignorance about him.

carried to *excess*, is much more rational, and innocent, than an equal attachment to the *frivolous* games I have been discrediting. Cards, I have heard, were invented, about a century or two ago, in France, to amuse the poor, distempered mind of one of its kings. Of course, all good courtiers in France would become card-players; and the fashion, no doubt, would descend. But though cards were imported from France, among other follies, into this nation; yet, at present, we are too manly to adopt them into general use;* indeed, I believe, cards are rarely, if at all, played at in England to *excess*. We have much dissipation amongst us at present, no doubt; but it is of a different kind. I could name several men, of eminent station, and fortune, who spend their days in hunting, and hawking, and tennis-playing: but still these are, in some degree, manly exercises: they lead to hardiment at least; and if the vigorous sportsman should be called into action, though there might be a deficiency of head perhaps, yet still there might be a powerful arm. I have sometimes in-

* A taste for this amusement is much altered, since the days of Sir Philip Sidney.

deed, seen gaming in England; but it is rare. The most fatal effects of it, which I have met with, were abroad. At Naples I was introduced to a society of gentlemen, who pleased me much. They were sensible men, chiefly Germans and Italians; and I thought myself happy in their company, expecting at least to perfect myself in language. Little more, however, had passed than the first overtures of our acquaintance, when I found their great amusement was gaming; to which they were all immoderately addicted; as were several others, who frequented their company. Three evenings at least in the week were given up to this *employment*; for in fact, it deserved that name. I was innocently drawn in at first; and lost, in a few nights, as much money as would have carried me through Italy. But I was so shocked at my own folly, and at their madness, that I left my new friends, by suddenly leaving the city. The great source of gaming, no doubt, is avarice; on which stock, it hath often been remarked, any vice may be engrafted. But when we see avarice in the common intercourse of life—in the schemes of trade, for instance, or ambition, in which actions and incidents are dilated

through a variety of circumstances, the effects of this odious vice, thus spread over a large surface, if I may so speak, do not strike the observer so forcibly. Its genuine colours are so mixed and varied with others, that it is often disguised. But, in the rapid movements of gaming, where fortunes are made, and lost in a moment, you see the direful effects of avarice drawn, as it were, to a focus. The horrid grin of exultation over the ruin of a neighbour—the wild agony of despair—the blasphemous oath—the frantic imprecation, have not yet had time to muffle themselves in the folds of dissimulation. All is open and glaring. In short, I believe more horrid ideas, than the gaming table presents, can be displayed nowhere else on this side the infernal regions.

I hope (said the good treasurer) that what you have seen abroad, will never be realised in England! Away with your cards! I have seen enough of them, both in the way of *dissipation* and of *excess*. If it were possible, I should wish to abolish them in every country. But the best of legislators cannot keep corruption from creeping in. As an innocent amusement, though a *frivolous* one, we might, per-

haps, allow cards, in moderation: but the great mischief is, they lead so directly to *dissipation* and *excess*; that, to prevent these, nothing, I fear, would suffice, but a total restraint: and, for that reason, I think every good citizen should set his face against them.

Your Lordship (said Sir Philip) exactly expresses my meaning; and I exempted chess, merely because it is not likely to be carried to any general excess: if it were, it would equally meet my censure.

But, in the mean time, (said Lord Burleigh) while we discourage our enemies, let us not foster our false friends. You, who are a man of taste, and lover of the ingenious arts, will be so good as to inform us, whether they too may not be carried into *excess*.

No doubt, (replied Sir Philip) they may; and we certainly disallow excess here too, as in every thing else. But I did not undertake to exculpate the arts from this charge. All I undertook to prove, was, that the *excesses* of the man of taste were of a much less ruinous nature, than the *excesses* of these *frivolous* amusements. I certainly allow, that the man of taste may consume more time on his favour-

ite amusement than is properly consistent with his engagements in life. He may injure his fortune also, by spending more on works of art than he can afford; at least, than various other calls upon him, still more urgent, will admit. But there is no *corruption*, even in the midst of this *excess*. An inordinate love for the arts, may, indeed, lead the mind from nobler pursuits; but still it has a tendency rather to improve, than vitiate. A man may be *dissipated*, for instance, by music;—that is, he may be drawn aside from better engagements. But his dissipation will be of a very different kind from the dissipation of cards. While cards leave no traces on the mind, but what are pernicious, or trifling at best, the other furnishes a rational gratification; and, in general, its tendencies are virtuous: it may soothe grief—it may soften a boisterous passion—it may excite a humane one, and may give the mind that harmonized disposition, which, though removed perhaps, to some distance from religion, is at least of a kindred family.—In the same way, the love of painting may be carried to excess. I have known some people empty their pockets to adorn their houses. But still there is some-

thing left. Cards leave nothing behind, (I leave the vile profits of gaming out of the question,) but the remembrance of folly: whereas the picture, if you have gone too far, may go to market again;—and that too after it has already given you all its advantages; not only in the way of rational amusement, as I endeavoured to shew, but in the way also of moral improvement. I hope your Lordship will not be surprised, if I affirm, that the art of painting is calculated to instruct, as well as please. When you see the fortitude of a hero—the faith of an apostle—or the villainous countenance of an apostate, strongly characterised in some correspondent act, you may be more deeply impressed, perhaps, than even by the historian's dilating page; according to the moral poet; who tells us those things make the strongest impression,

Ipse sibi tradit spectator.——

I speak, at least, from my own feelings. When I have stood before a picture of Michael Angelo, or Raphael, my breast has swelled with enthusiasm; and I have almost thought myself present at the last judgment—at the transfiguration—at the holy birth at Bethlehem—or in

whatever circumstance the painter chose to place me.

Even portrait-painting, which is far inferior to history, is, to me, a very interesting exhibition. I read the works of the good Erasmus with double pleasure, from my being so well acquainted with his face by Holben; and travelled through Utopia with much more satisfaction, by carrying with me a strong idea of the ingenious author. Nor should I ever have been so much moved with the unmerited distresses of our Sovereign's mother, nor have felt such sympathy for her, if I had not had her pleasing countenance so often before me. But, above all, Titian's art in realising life, excites our admiration. How often have I stood gazing at his portraits of celebrated personages, till I have seen them move, and heard them speak. Indeed, to see his pictures, is, alone, a sufficient motive for a journey into Italy and Germany. And yet I should be well content, if we could have the portraits of numbers, whom I could name, of our own conspicuous countrymen, by such a hand as Holben; who was true to the lines of nature, in whatever form he found them; though he could neither give his

figures that grace and dignity; nor draw from his pallet that glow of colouring, which we admire so much in the Venetian.

With all this, Lord Burleigh expressed himself much pleased; and said, he could not receive a greater pleasure than to walk through a gallery hung with celebrated characters, taken either from ancient or modern times. He then complimented Sir Philip on his having so well defended his fair clients—and owned himself convinced, that excess in the arts was less mischievous, than in the amusements he had discredited. But, continued he, I have sometimes been offended with seeing the loves of the gods,* and other lascivious stories represented in painting. Such representations have, in my opinion, a very bad effect on morals; and I should be glad to know how you defend your art on this charge.

I do not defend it at all; (said Sir Philip) I should be sorry to defend the abuse of any thing, however valuable in itself; indeed, the more valuable a thing is, the worse is the abuse

* Titian is said to have indulged his pencil in these loose scenes.

of it. The abuse of a noble,* for instance, is fifteen times greater than the abuse of a shilling. All I can say is, that the abuse does not detract from the art, but from the artist, who is guilty of it. Having made this concession, I should wish, if your Lordship will indulge me, to pursue my argument, by making a few more observations. On a supposition, that both these modes of amusement, arising from the *frivolous*, and the *elegant* arts, were *equally reprehensible in themselves*, we must still decide in favour of the arts, because they are naturally *less the vehicles of corruption*. In the first place, their influence is more bounded; only here and there is a mind smitten with the love of art—or capable of pursuing it with any advantage; whereas every one can play at cards or billiards. Besides, the lover of art, however mischievous his propensities, needs only corrupt himself. He can pursue his favorite amusement even in solitude.—He can touch his lute, or admire his picture, though he have no intercourse with others. Whereas the card-player must have associates; commonly several; he can do nothing by him-

* Queen Elizabeth's noble was valued at fifteen shillings.

self; his business cannot go on unless he spread, and inculcate his mischief. I should wish just to add one word more:—the lover of art is master of his own time; he can relinquish or resume his amusement, as he pleases. Whereas, he who seeks his amusement at the card-table, gives up his time into the hands of others.

Lord Burleigh seemed much pleased with these last observations, and was going to close the debate with some general remarks, when Sir Philip begged his attention to one circumstance more, which, he said, would place the arts in a new light. The circumstance he alluded to, was the wonderful effect which the scenes of nature, considered as pictures, had often on the mind of a man, who was a real lover of art. Among all the objects of imitation, he observed, which artists had yet selected, landscape painting had hitherto, in a great degree, escaped them; and it appeared to him exceedingly strange, that, while so many painters had arisen, who had nobly given us the human form, both in history and in portrait, so few, indeed scarcely any, that he remembered, worth notice, had given us any representation of the face of nature. Titian's

landscapes he had heard much praised; he had, indeed, seen two or three of them in the Venetian territories; but he owned they did not come up to his idea of truth in landscape. However, Titian, though he might have great merit, was but a single instance. He could not recollect another, from his own knowledge, though he had heard the Bolognese school praised. He did not, he said, bring the two modes of composition, history and landscape, together, with any idea of comparing them. The man of genius, who can draw from his imagination some noble character,—a hero,—a patriarch,—or a saint, cultivates certainly, a more sublime art, than he who can draw together a composition only of trees and mountains. Yet still, he said, the latter was certainly a grand subject, and claimed the attention of every lover of art. It was wonderful, therefore, to him it had been so much neglected. For my own part, said he, I have often felt myself transported both at home and abroad, with the grand and beautiful scenes of nature, almost beyond the power of speech. When a boy, with what attention would I listen to my father, when I heard him describe the

grand views he had seen in Ireland ;* he could draw a little, and would often amuse me with sketching the rocks and mountains he remembered. Some of his sketches are lying by me to this day, and shew a knowledge of the art which one should not have expected in a man of business. A circumstance, however, in my life which I shall always remember, gave my mind the first real impression of the magnificent scenes of nature, and of the grand stile in the composition of landscape. But I fear I trespass on your Lordship's attention, as you seemed inclined to put an end to the debate.

My only reason, (said Lord Burleigh) was your having silenced me : you had fully convinced me, that there is a choice among amusements; and that even excess in one, is much less fraught with mischief, than excess in another. But if you have any thing to say farther on the subject, I shall, with pleasure, listen to it. We have yet an hour on our hands before the bell will summon us home—and you may assure yourself, that it can never be tedious to me, to

* Sir Henry Sidney, father to Sir Philip, was several years Lord Deputy of Ireland.

hear any anecdote in your life, which you think it of consequence *always to remember.*

I meant only (said Sir Philip) to inform your Lordship, what first kindled in my breast a love for landscape—and to shew you the effect, which the wonderful scenes of nature, when considered as pictures, may have on the imagination. A little before I went abroad, my father, who had a commission to execute for the queen at York, paid a visit in his way, to the earl of Cumberland,* at his castle at Skipton, and carried me with him. His intention, I believe, was to give me a little knowledge of my own country, before he sent me abroad; but the pretence was to pay a visit to the young lord Clifford, with whom I had been educated at school, and afterwards at Oxford; and with whom I had contracted a very intimate friendship, though he was somewhat older than myself.

I remember him well; (said the treasurer) He was a tall slender youth; well made—had a high forehead—large blue eyes—a complexion

* This was Clifford, earl of Cumberland, one of the most extraordinary men of his age for military achievements. He undertook several naval expeditions at his own expense.

rather florid, and a nose somewhat acquiline. When he was first presented to the queen, by the duke of Norfolk, I remember her majesty's grace took great notice of him, and turning to the duke, said, he should be her young knight.

Your lordship (said Sir Philip) remembers well his person; but the great qualities, and endowments of his mind, would require many words to describe. He was, in truth, the mirror of nobility;—and his unhappy, and untimely death, may be lamented equally by his friends and his country. But let that pass among the inscrutable ways of Providence! It was one of the amusements of this spirited young nobleman, to explore every variety of country in his neighbourhood; and he used often to tell me, that we, inhabitants of the south of England, knew nothing of nature's sublimities. When I talked of the woody scenes of Penshurst, and its delightful meadows, he would laugh, and say they were well enough for shepherds, and shepherdesses to dance in; but they were poor scenes compared with those sublime castles, in which the genii of rocks and mountains dwelt. As we were now, therefore, in the neighbourhood of these

sublime castles, I begged he would introduce me to them; and give me some idea of what he called the *sublimities of nature*. At first, he seemed rather backward, as he thought I should scarce be able to travel through such scenes of desolation. In many parts, he told me, we should meet with no appearance of inhabitancy. Can you climb a perpendicular mountain, he would ask, a mile in height? Or can you occasionally sleep without a bed;—sit without a chair;—or dine without a table? My curiosity made all difficulties light; and, as my father was so good as to say he would wait for me at York, we set out for Appleby Castle, another seat of the earl of Cumberland's, on the confines of those scenes which I was so desirous to examine. Having taken a view of the Vale of Eden, and that pleasing country which the castle commands, we mounted our horses, and carrying with us a sumpter-mule, laden with necessaries, began our expedition. Often we travelled on foot over lofty mountains, where no horse could have found footing; and several nights we slept under what shelter we could find among the rocks. My companion, who was versed in all the arts of exigence, would spread a blanket

over a few hedge-stakes, under which, as the weather was warm, we slept comfortably. The same care his humanity always took of the servant, who attended with the sumpter. Our horses, in the mean time, waited for us at some distant inn, perhaps a dozen miles from the place of our residence, where we met them the next day, or the day after. My friend being well acquainted with the country, knew perfectly how to order our march, and dispose the several circumstances of it. But our fatigues were well repaid; we travelled over all the mountainous parts of Cumberland, and Westmorland; and I know not, that I ever spent three weeks, in what I may call, so delicious a manner. It was all enchantment; during the whole time I was in a delirium of rapture:—mountains, lakes, rocks, and woods, in an infinite variety of awful combinations, were continually displaying themselves before my eyes in the day—and rising again to my imagination in the visions of the night.* I have since, probably, seen as romantic

* These scenes were much more beautiful when Sir Philip Sidney saw them, than they are now. They were then much more in a state of nature. Their woods had

countries among the Alps, Apennines, and the Pyrenees; but, from a first impression, or from the pleasing association of ideas, which my engaging friend has left upon my mind, I certainly never was so much enchanted with any appearances of nature, as with those I met with here.

I am greatly obliged to you, (said Lord Burleigh) for an account of a part of our island, of which I knew little before. I am tolerably well acquainted with our sea-coasts; and can point out where an enemy may land, and where an embarkation may be made :* but these delightful scenes, which you describe, had never attracted my attention.—Now, I suppose, you would wish to have all these fine places handsomely limned, and hung up in your hall.

Not only so, (replied Sir Philip) but I should wish to draw, from the examination of these fine countries, several other sources of

not suffered those depredations which we now regret; their banks and islands were yet uninjured by those puerile works of art, which now every where deform them.

* There is, in the British Museum, a set of maps of the several counties of England, which formerly belonged to Lord Burleigh; in which, with his own hand, he has made several remarks of the kind mentioned here. See a farther account of those Maps, in *Observations on the Southern Coast*.

amusement.—But it is a fascinating subject; and our conversation has already been so long, that I fear to enter on any new matter.

To say the truth, (said the Treasurer) I am not without my fears also. Your company is rather infectious. You may make such a convert of me, that my ideas of these things may interfere with matters of more consequence. When I am ruminating how to raise a subsidy, a rock, or a mountain, may interrupt my calculations. Or, when I am considering whom to entrust with some commission of importance, I may be drawn aside by an impertinent reflection, whom I may best employ to make me a picture. However, as we shall part to-morrow, and I shall immediately be plunged *civilibus undis*, I shall run the risk, and, with great pleasure, hear what you have farther to say on a subject, which is to me so very novel.

No doubt, (answered Sir Philip) what your Lordship suggested is among the first ideas, which the great and beautiful scenes of nature excite. We should wish to see them brought home, to adorn our apartments. But the utmost that art can do, will, undoubtedly, fall short of nature; especially in spreading over

the mind those delightful feelings of enthusiasm, which the real scene inspires; yet still, though this cannot be done, these romantic countries, and the several views they exhibit at different seasons—the innocent manners of the inhabitants—and various other circumstances, which attend them, appear to me to afford a very engaging field for poetry, and description.* Of this our great poet† often takes the advantage: nor am I more pleased with any part of his works, than where he gives us descriptions of the different scenes of nature; in which he appears to have made accurate observations. And I believe, indeed, these observations were chiefly made, where my father made his, in the different parts of Ireland.—The beauties of landscape may farther incite us to aim at handling the pencil ourselves. If we do it only

* The reader will remember, that Sir Philip Sidney's thoughts were, at this time, engaged in writing his Arcadia, and were full of the ideas of the country; though, from the romantic notions of the times, that work deviates from the simplicity, we now expect in these descriptions. If Sir Philip had lived in Thomson's days, he would have described the country in more natural colours.

† Spenser.

inaccurately, it may still be of use to refresh the memory. Those little sketches, which my father made in Ireland, I well remember, enabled him to describe a thousand circumstances, which were not marked in the sketches themselves.

I can easily conceive it, (said Lord Burleigh;) sketches, I suppose, are a kind of picturesque arithmetic, in which three figures may represent a hundred.—I suppose, however, that you artists see things in a stronger light, than we common observers. For myself, I might pass through any of these beautiful scenes without taking the least notice of them.

Perhaps so, (replied Sir Philip;) but it is merely because your Lordship's thoughts are always engaged at home—employed on some great scheme of public utility. Whereas our thoughts are in our eyes—always gazing about on the watch for something to entertain them. And this constant *look out*, as it may be called, after beauty, in every natural object, gives us a quickness in finding various sources of it, which are lost on common observers. Your Lordship, however, I am persuaded, has more candour, than to censure one of the most innocent, and

perhaps one of the most improving pleasures, which Providence has provided for us.

Censure it? (replied Lord Burleigh,) by no means. The politician finds out innocent amusements for the publick; but if they can find them for themselves, his business is superseded.

As your Lordship is so condescending (said Sir Philip,)I will venture to go a step farther. It appears to me, that an admiration of the beauties of nature may be ranked in a still higher form, than that of administering merely to pleasure. Perhaps a person of your Lordship's serious disposition will not accuse me of enthusiasm, when I speak of these sublime appendages of landscape, as leading the mind to the great author of them. Grandeur enters into all our ideas of the almighty; and where shall we meet with such magnificent ideas, as these scenes present? My young friend, who had a mind turned to every thing that was great and noble, and virtuous, used to say, that by studiously bringing his mind to the contemplation of grand scenes, he could raise in himself the highest fervours of devotion. What a temple, he would cry (turning round, and pointing to some vast amphi-

theatre of mountains) is this! How little does a man feel himself in the midst of it! How immense the Deity, who framed, and fills it!

Though Lord Burleigh did not entirely see the force of the argument, as he was little acquainted with the grandeur of those scenes on which it was founded, yet he readily acknowledged the probable truth of it. I remember, said he, when I first saw the ocean, I recoiled some paces back; my sensation was only astonishment: but if I had had the young Lord Clifford's pious disposition, I might have turned my astonishment into devotion.

I am afraid (said Sir Philip,) of trespassing longer on your Lordship, but there is one observation more, and only one, I should wish to make. It may be considered, indeed, as a kind of corollary to what we have just been observing of the scenes of nature; and I am the rather desirous of submitting it to your lordship's judgment, as it is novel, I believe, and has not obtained the sanction of any admirer of art, or nature. What I would suggest, is, that we should make the scenes of nature our model for our artificial improvements in gardening. Nature is the standard of perfection in all the

arts of imitation. She gives us the model; we have only to select and imitate. When we paint a man, or a horse, for instance, we take our ideas from nature: why should we not also take our ideas of a beautiful country from nature also. We have models equally for both. But in this latter, instead of making nature improve upon herself, by picking out, and imitating her choicest scenes, we deform, and transform every thing into shapes, totally unlike any thing that ever before existed. This park, said he, in which we are now walking, is a pleasant scene. The woods, and the lawns, mix agreeably together; and the eye rests satisfied with the elegant and pleasing simplicity of the whole. And if we enquire into the source of all this beauty, we must refer it solely to nature. But when we enter the garden, beyond those elms, we find ourselves in another world: nature is gone; and we are in the regions of art. There the sheers have metamorphosed trees, and hedges, into a thousand strange shapes; and beauty has been diminished, in proportion as expense has been increased. As a proof of this, I might produce a more illustrious instance, than my good Lord Pembroke's garden here at Wilton. May

I mention, without offence, the superb decorations around her Majesty's royal palace at Nonsuch? If I think them, however, the model of every thing that is absurd, and awkward, your Lordship will not suppose I mean any reflection on her highness's taste; for she only received these wonderful works, as her father left them.

But before I suffer your acrimony to run loose (returned the treasurer) among those costly works of art, at Nonsuch, I must first tell you, I am not clear, that nature, either does, or should, set an exact model in the works of art. How does she set a model in music? Are we to have recourse to the groves; and take all our roundelays, and corantos from thrushes, and nightingales? If, then, we may improve upon nature in music, why not in gardening?—And if so, her majesty's garden, at Nonsuch, may be considered as a noble effort of the improvement of art on nature. Besides, there is a grandeur in these costly decorations, which bespeaks a great prince. If the garden of a palace consisted only of trees and green fields, it would contain nothing but what any one might have; but when we see such a profusion of marble

basons, and fountains, carved rock-work, cascades, canals, parterres, and other expensive embellishments, the prince enjoys as he ought, what no body else can enjoy. These rich appendages are of a piece with his robes of state, his costly furniture, his yeomen in embroidered liveries, and all the other splendid accompaniments of royalty.

That a royal garden (answered Sir Philip) should be extensive, magnificent, and *properly* adorned with *costly* ornaments I allow; but I did not expect to have found in the frugal treasurer of England (your Lordship will excuse me) an advocate for expense, centering merely in itself. Nor can I well digest your argument in allowing consumption in a prince, for the sake only of shewing how much he can consume more than other people. Expense either in a prince or a private man is, in my opinion, idle without an end; and if the sums laid out on the gardens at Nonsuch do not make them beautiful, I fear an apology may be wanted for laying them out at all. That art, in many cases, may improve nature, I allow; but what we see at Nonsuch is not improving nature: it is deforming—it is destroying it. There is no nature left—all is art;

and what we admire is, I fear, only (what your Lordship honestly suggests) prodigality of expense; and this we rather gaze and wonder at, than admire with judgment. As to your Lordship's instance, with regard to music, it does not appear to me a case in point: neither music, nor architecture, is an imitative art—we are indebted for both to human invention. But in painting, in statuary, and, I may add, in descriptive poetry, we have nature for a model. If we desert her, in any of these, we lose what should be our *standard of perfection*. Thus, too, it is in gardening: nature gives us beautiful models, and if we aim at perfection, we must follow them. The arts, however, in their pure, chaste form, come forward with a slow pace. Centuries are required to bring them to perfection: but if my countrymen become rich, I doubt not, that sooner or later, they will acquire a just taste in gardening, as well as in other elegant arts; and relinquish this unmeaning expensive mode of decoration, so admired by their forefathers. We have a great desire amongst us, at present, to acquire the *learned languages*;* but we have

* It was fashionable even among the court-ladies of those days to read Greek and Latin: Q. Elizabeth herself set the example.

little *science*—that is, we are only at the *gate* of knowledge, though I doubt not shall soon enter it. When that happens, the elegant arts will enter likewise. Your Lordship, however, sees, that even now, though we have no connection with them, if people have money they will spend it in some prodigal way; in an absurd garden, or a profuse entertainment; and I see not how a good taste can be more mischievous, than a bad one. Thus I have completed my argument, and have endeavoured to shew, that there is not only a difference among amusements, but that such amusements, as arise from the polite arts, are both superior to any other in themselves, and less mischievous in their excess.

And, in truth (said Lord Burleigh) you have managed the cause ably; at least you have convinced me by your arguments. But now let me put your candour to the test—as the arts are, by your own account, the handmaids of luxury, and as luxury is certainly the most pernicious inmate of a state, would you willingly give up the former to get rid of the latter?

Certainly, (said Sir Philip) I should give up much to withstand luxury; but your Lordship's

question, I think, involves a multitude of other questions. It remains to be inquired how far wealth, and, of course, luxury, are connected with knowledge, science, and even religion? It remains to be inquired, how far one is to be tolerated for the sake of the other? It remains to be inquired, how far amusements are in themselves necessary; and what better we could propose than those furnished by the arts? It remains to be inquired also, how far we are obliged to give up things useful, because bad people may abuse them? But these questions would carry us into a field too extensive, for our limited time.

It is true, (said Lord Burleigh) all these points require discussion; and I should be glad of some future opportunity to discuss them with you. In the mean time, I will narrow my question, and propose it thus. If, by keeping a nation poor, it could also be kept virtuous, would you, in order to keep it so, give up not only the polite arts, but the refinements also of learning and science?

Most undoubtedly (replied Sir Philip) I should; we should then have gained all that is really worth keeping. The nation, I believe, at

present may be called uncorrupt, well-principled, religious, pious on the whole—brave, and generous; and to keep them as they are, would be the utmost of my wish. Nay, I should, perhaps, think it dangerous to risk the experiment of infusing arts among them. But it is as impossible to keep a nation at a stand, as it is to keep youth from verging into age. The first thing, at least, I should do, would be to vote the dismission of such ministers as your Lordship, from the management of affairs; who, by making the nation prosperous, will infallibly make it rich. The great conclusion, therefore, from the whole is, that while you, and my good father-in-law,* and other great men are taking such effectual pains to make the nation wealthy, you will be so good as suffer such little men as I am, to recommend the means of throwing the superfluity of that wealth into the most amusing and least corrupting channels.

As Lord Burleigh was about to reply, a horseman appeared riding towards them at full speed, across the park, whom they presently knew, by

* Sir Francis Walsingham, whose only daughter Sir Philip Sidney married.

his dress, to be one of the queen's messengers. He delivered letters to the treasurer, requiring him to attend a council the next day, which Lord Burleigh said was two days sooner, than he expected; he took a hasty leave, therefore, of the earl of Pembroke, and immediately set out for London.

It is probable, that this interview at Wilton might have contributed, through the good offices of Lord Burleigh, to bring the queen and Sir Philip Sidney sooner together. In a short time after it, the queen sent for him to court, and appointed him governor of Flushing, one of the cautionary towns, which the Dutch had put into the queen's hands. He was also, at the same time, made general of the English cavalry abroad. But the career of his military renown was soon at an end. Having performed two or three gallant actions, he was mortally wounded, on the 22d of September, 1586, at the battle of Zutphen; and what was a most extraordinary instance of public respect, the whole kingdom went into mourning at his death.*

* "So general was the lamentation for him, that for many months after, it was accounted indecent for any gentleman of quality to appear, at court or city, in any light or gaudy apparel." See Collin's Memoirs.

ON

THE INFLICTION

OF

DIVINE PUNISHMENT,

FOR THE PURPOSES

OF

NATIONAL CORRECTION.

On the Infliction of Divine Punishment, &c.

Dr. Lucas was a very exemplary parish minister. His discourses from the pulpit were plain, useful, and affecting. They were chiefly directed to the lower people; but were so full of scriptural instruction, and delivered with so much feeling and energy, that every hearer might profit by them. He could accommodate himself also in conversation, to all sorts of people; he was acquainted with the world; but instead of using his knowledge as the means of advancement, he considered it only as the means of making himself more useful in his parish. He knew something of every thing—and had the happy talent of talking to men of all ranks, and all professions, in their own way.

Mr. Hales, his neighbour, was a very valuable

man, and much esteemed by the doctor, with whom he went hand in hand, in all his benevolent schemes. He was an informed man also—bookish—rather sedentary, and often subject to great lowness of spirits. In the summer of the year 1794, particularly, when the French armies had ravaged the borders of Spain, Italy, and Germany—had driven the Austrians out of the Netherlands, and threatened Holland with an invasion, he was much cast down with the prospect of public affairs.

The doctor calling upon him, one evening, about the beginning of September, found him with a newspaper in his hand. Accounts had just been received, that the French had taken Ypres, and Ostend—had made themselves masters of Sluys, and were preparing to attack Breda.

These are dismal times, doctor, (said Mr. Hales.) I fear the fate of old England is come at last. Two or three gazettes more will put the French in possession of all Holland. It is reported, I see, they are already masters of Flushing; which is, I believe, within sixty miles of Amsterdam. And if they get possession of Holland, they will soon arm a formidable ma-

rine; and pour in millions upon us. Poor Ucalegon must expect to burn next.*

Come, come, my good friend, (said the doctor,) let us not make ourselves prophets, and look into futurity for frightful events, which we cannot foresee, and which may never arrive. The French have many a wet ditch to wade through, before they can over-run Holland.† And when they have done it, I hope the difficulty of invading England will still remain.—Besides, their government, (if it can be called a government) is such a rope of sand, that we may expect still more divisions among them.‡—But these (continued the doctor) are only temporary consolations. We must not depend upon them; as they themselves depend only on contingencies. I would have us *look* at the best side of things; but still *prepare* for the worst—that is, I would wish us to be always prompt, and prepared

* See Virgil, B. II. l.

† It pleased God, that a severe frost set in, and the ditches, canals, and rivers of Holland were all turned into dry land, so that the numerous armies of the French easily over-ran it.

‡ Robespierre had just been put to death; and his opponents were still striving for mastery.

against our enemies; but yet to provide against the worst, by having always such consolations ready, as religion only can furnish.

Aye, my dear sir, (said Mr. Hales,) but where shall we find the christian, who can so entirely detach himself from the things of this world, as to seek none of its *enjoyments* and *consolations* from it?

You seem to confound two ideas, my dear sir, (replied the doctor,) which are in fact very distinct—the *enjoyments*, and the *consolations* of the world. While Providence kindly allows us the good things of this world, if we *enjoy* them with moderation, and gratitude, I hope we enjoy them, as our great Creator approves. But when he pleases to take them from us, we then want *consolation*; and must have recourse to something better than the world.

It is very true, (said Mr. Hales;) but we are so closely connected with the world—we receive so much pleasure from it, and often too so much alleviation of pain, that it is a difficult matter to discard it from our friendship, even in our greatest distresses.

The world may be a pleasing friend, (said the doctor,) in prosperity; though even then a

deceitful one. But I see not how it can be a friend in adversity, because then it forsakes us. I see not what *consolation* it has to offer in time of distress. Suppose the great catastrophe you fear, should take place—suppose the French should over-run Holland—then invade us in such numbers, as we could not oppose; and, in the end, overturn our government; could the *world*, think you, offer any topic of consolation to us?

I think not, truly, (replied Mr. Hales;) but in smaller afflictions the world may sometimes be a comforter. If we lose one thing, we still possess another.

In *any* affliction, (said the doctor,) the world is but a sorry comforter, because all its comforts are precarious. And as its afflictions may be grievous, we ought to make provision for the worst; as we are at all times liable to them. But then we have a friend, who stiles himself the *God of consolation*;* and who promises us comfort, even in our greatest distresses. To him we should always apply; and pour out in prayer the distresses of our hearts.

In theory, no doubt, (said Mr. Hales,) no-

* Rom. xv. 5.

thing can be more true; but I should wish to know whose faith is sufficient to receive, with composure, such a crisis as you have been suggesting.

We have instances of faith on record, (returned the doctor,) even in times less enlightened than ours, which would enable the holy sufferer to receive, with magnanimity, the greatest calamities, and to cry out from the heart, *God is my help, and strength—a very present help in trouble. Therefore will I not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea.** If you think this only a pious ejaculation, a number of instances may be collected from the times of persecution, in which such pious sentiments have been realized.

Aye, (said Mr. Hales,) this is a height of religion, which all good men would wish to attain. No acquisition on earth seems so desirable.

And why may we not attain it? (replied the doctor,)—If we *firmly believe*, as we certainly ought to believe, that all events are governed by God—and that he knows best how to distribute

* Psalms. xlvi. 1.

these events, we cannot be distressed at any thing that happens to us, independent of our own wrong behaviour.

I have certainly, my dear sir, (said Mr. Hales,) religion enough to accede to this doctrine *as a truth*. But the difficulty here, as in other things, lies in *the practice*—that is, in short, we believe the truth; but we do not believe it *firmly* enough to resign ourselves to it. We see the business of the world so continually translated by second causes—and the effect often so proportioned to the cause—numerous armies over-running provinces—and disciplined fleets destroying those, which are less disciplined,* that it is a difficult matter to put second causes entirely out of the account.

Nor should we, (said the doctor:) only we should not consider them as the principal movers. If our great Ruler see a visitation right, no second causes can prevent it, let us employ them as we please. And if he do not see it right, no hostile endeavours, however threatening, can bring it about. When a child views a puppet-shew, and

* Lord Howe's fleet had beaten the French fleet, a few months before.

sees every figure in its place, and each performing that kind of action, which is most agreeable to the connection it has with the other figures, he considers each as the author of its own motion; knowing nothing of the hands, which guide the performance. But we, who know more of the matter, know well, that the whole is a piece of directed machinery.—It is thus that the religious man, who is introduced by revelation, as it were, behind the scenes, views all the events of this world. All the actors on the stage of this world are mere puppets. Whatever appearance there may be of cause, and effect, he knows there is only one universal cause of all. Through this great cause, events are combined with infinite variety; and in a manner wholly inscrutable to us. Sometimes they appear as if produced by chance—sometimes as if conducted by design. Sometimes as if the effect was proportioned to the cause—and sometimes as if they purposely mocked all human skill, and foresight. This apparent uncertainty in the affairs of this life, though guided, in fact, with so much exact contrivance, is of great use—or at least is intended to be of great use to mankind,—in breaking their dependence on the world—in shewing them how insufficient their own foresight and exertions

are to procure them protction—and in setting before them, as the great object of their trust, the one omnipotent universal Cause.

But this (said Mr. Hales) seems to preclude our own endeavours; at least, it appears a dangerous doctrine—something like predestination in religion.

By no means, (said the doctor;) there is a manifest distinction between over-ruling the human will, and directing inanimate things. As it is not in my power to reconcile free will with the foreknowledge of God, I do not attempt it, but persuade myself, that the difficulty lies only in the incapacity of my own understanding. But I can see no difficulty at all, in supposing, that worldly events may be under the immediate controul of a particular Providence; and yet that our own endeavours should not be precluded. God works by second causes; and our own endeavours are, in part, those very second causes, which God employs. This was even the idea of the heathen world, in their intercourse with heaven. Their own exertions were thought necessary in gaining the assistance of the gods. This we may gather from the ancient apologue of Hercules and the Carter.

I do not recollect it (said Mr. Hales.)

When the carter found his waggon in the slough, (continued the doctor,) he knelt down, and begged Hercules to drag it out. I never grant an idle prayer, said Hercules; set your shoulder to the wheel, and do what you can yourself, and then pray to me for farther assistance.

If you like a *fact* as well as a *fable*, (said Mr. Hales,) I can give you one nearer home, I met with it, this very day, in the newspaper. A Portuguese frigate, going to Spithead, through the Needles, struck upon the Shingles. The day was calm, and the shelf not dangerous. But the crew were thrown into such confusion, that instead of trying any means to save the ship, they fell upon their knees to the Virgin-Mary for assistance. If they had cut away their masts, thrown out their guns, and heaved out their anchors, the frigate might have been saved; and they might, afterwards, have given thanks for their deliverance. But by leaving all to the Virgin-Mary, and doing nothing themselves, the ship was irretrievably lost.*

* It was supposed, the English pilot on board, was misinformed of the gage of the frigate; and through a mistake in the Portuguese measure, imagined she drew less water than she did.

I thank you for your *fact*, (said the doctor,) which is certainly more pertinent than my *fable*. Your story is an *argument*; mine was only an *illustration*.

But does it not rather, (said Mr. Hales,) seem an imputation on the justice of God, to grant success to a nation so wicked, as we conceive the French to be; and more wicked than we are inclined to hope we are ourselves?

In the first place, (replied the doctor,) let us not presume too much on our own righteousness. The Jacobin party, lately at the head of affairs in France, were certainly a set of the most abandoned, sanguinary, impious wretches, that ever governed a state; and, I believe, the present party, from what already appears, is not much better.* The French nobility, also were, in general, I believe, a very debauched race; and the higher orders of the clergy were, perhaps, not much better. But whether the body of the nation is not of a cast more innocent, and simple in their manners, than we are, I much doubt. The priests whom we en-

* It appeared afterwards, that they were much less sanguinary, and more civilized.

tertain at Winchester,* have universally shewn themselves to be a modest, quiet, and religious people; and to have borne persecution (though in the cause of the pope, yet certainly for conscience sake,) with the zeal of martyrs. The emigrants, aslo, of the lower orders, especially the Toulonese,† so far as I have been able to learn, were orderly, regular, and inoffensive. Superstitious the French peasantry may be, and I suppose they are—but superstition and good morals are not always at variance. Suppose, however, the French nation to be as wicked as you conceive them, why may they not be a scourge in God's hand, to punish a nation even less wicked than themselves? David seems to have had this idea, when he cried, *Deliver me, O Lord, from the ungodly, which is a sword of thine!*‡ He acknowledges, you see, the

* Many hundreds of them were entertained by private contribution, and afterwards at the public expense, at the king's house, there, and at other places.

† After the evacuation of Toulon, many of the French inhabitants came into England.

‡ Ps. xvii. 13.

agency of ungodly men, in working the designs of Providence; and, as it should appear from the mode of his expression, those *ungodly* men were used *as a sword* against people *less ungodly* than themselves. God works, indeed, by various means; formerly, as in the case of Sodom, by the *immediate* infliction of his wrath: in these days, generally, by the instrumentality of natural means. The elements are often his instruments; and often disease, and famine. But most commonly mankind are corrected by themselves; one wicked nation corrects another; and is itself corrected in its turn.

So you make the history of battles, bloodshed, and carnage, (said Mr. Hales) to be only the history of the acts of Providence.

Undoubtedly, (replied the doctor;) and where the curtain is drawn up, and we see the arm of the Almighty laid bare, we acknowledge him to be the immediate actor in all these scenes. The doctor then took up a bible, which lay on the table, and read the two or three following passages from different parts of Jeremiah. "Lo I "will bring a nation upon you, said God to Is- "rael; it is a mighty nation—a nation, whose "language thou knowest not. Their quiver is

" is an open sepulchre.—They are all mighty " men.—They shall eat up thy harvest, which " thy sons and thy daughters should eat.— " They shall eat up thy flocks and thy herds.— " They shall eat up thy vines, and thy fig- " trees.—They shall destroy thy fenced cities, " wherein thou trustest, with the sword.*— " And the carcases of this people shall be meat " for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of " the earth. And I will cause to cease from the " cities of Judah, and from the streets of Je- " rusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of " gladness—the voice of the bride-groom, and " the voice of the bride; for the land shall be " desolate.† And it shall come to pass, when " ye shall say, wherefore hath the Lord our God " done all these things unto us? Then shalt " thou answer, Like as ye have forsaken me, saith " the Lord, and served strange gods in the land, " so shall ye serve strangers in a land, that is not " your's."‡

What an awful picture, (said Mr. Hales,) have we here of God's bringing destruction upon a nation corrupted with wickedness!

And such representations, (continued the doctor,) are common in the Bible history; where we

* Jer. v. 15. † Jer. vii. 33. ‡ Jer. v. 19.

see the Almighty threatening, and acting, as it were, in person. Sometimes the wicked nation is threatened with one kind of evil, and sometimes with another. In one of the next chapters of Jeremiah—the fourteenth—we find God threatens a famine; in the prophetic language it is represented as if it had already come to pass. "Judah mourneth, and the cry of Jerusalem is "gone up. They came to the pits, and found no "water: they returned with their vessels empty. "They were confounded, and covered their "heads. The ground is chapt. There was no "rain on the earth. The hind calved in the "field, and forsook her young, because there "was no grass. The wild asses stood in the "high places. They snuffed up the wind. Their "eyes failed because there was no grass."

How beautiful, as well as forcible, (said Mr. Hales,) is this description! Where have we such images as the prophetic language often furnishes.

The doctor then turning carelessly over the book of Jeremiah, took up the argument again, and said, This whole book is a wonderful display of God's providence, and directly meets our present subject. The first part of it is a

continuation of prophecy against the Jews for their sins, and a threat, that they should be carried into captivity by the Babylonians, which afterwards came to pass. The latter part of the book contains a threat against the Babylonians themselves, after they had finished the work, which God had appointed. This threat too was afterwards executed by the Persians under Cyrus.

But are we not to suppose, (said Mr. Hales,) that all these denunciations are acts of that judicial power which God, in a peculiar manner, exercised over the Jews? The Jews, we are told, lived under a theocracy.

And I hope we live under a theocracy also, (replied the doctor.) You see, from the passages I have just read, that the Babylonians were under the same theocracy as the Jews: and if they, why not others? Can we suppose that God governed the affairs of the Jews, and left the affairs of other nations to blind chance?

No, surely, (said Mr. Hales.) Yet the mind revolts at ascribing all this carnage and bloodshed to God. Is there not, think you, some appearance of harshness, or, at least, something that we cannot easily account for, in supposing God to bring one nation against another, to per-

petrate all these scenes of bloodshed and slaughter? God forbids murder; and yet we must acknowledge, on these principles, that he authorizes it himself.

Great difficulties, no doubt, (said the doctor,) attend the discussion of these mysterious questions. They are above our capacity either to understand or explain.—Yet, still, we can adduce such reasons, as appear fully to vindicate the wisdom and justice of Providence. *You* are forbidden to commit murder, because you have no power over the life of man. But God, who gave life, has certainly the power of taking it away, when, and in what manner, he thinks fit. And with regard to the man himself, as he is mortal, and must die, what difference does it make, whether he die by a musket-ball, or a fever—alone—or in company with a thousand more?—These again, as men, are wicked, and from thence, as the apostle speaks, *come wars, and fightings among them*. God only uses this wickedness, as the physician does poison, in making it useful.

But we do not always, (said Mr. Hales,) see this effect produced. Italy, for instance, has been desolated over, and over; and yet still, I believe, is as wicked as it ever was.

It is impossible for us, (said the doctor,) to estimate the virtue and vice of a nation: and Italy, for ought we know, might have revived in virtue, after every infliction of punishment: and if the common people of that country are now as wicked as ever, (which is more than either you or I can know,) God may punish them again. Every nation on earth hath had, more or less, its catastrophes; and hath more, or less profited by them: while God, no doubt, repeats these chastisements as often as he sees it necessary.

It may be so; (said Mr. Hales) at least we should satisfy ourselves with such reasoning as this.

Certainly, (replied the doctor;) and to take up again the idea of theocracy, I cannot help being of opinion, that one reason for God's giving us the Bible history was, that we might have an undoubted and infallible record of the mode in which the providence of God commonly concerns itself with the affairs of man. So that by bringing all the transactions of the world to this standard, we may have an awful view of God's mode of treating mankind. In

the Bible we see the first great cause working *plainly* and *openly* its several effects; and I know not why we should not suppose Providence to act now in the same manner. The fact is, that as we now see only second causes *immediately* concerned, we are too apt to attribute all agency to them, and leave the first great Cause out of all our questions.

In other words, (said Mr. Hales,) we think we can manage second causes as we please, and, therefore, *foolishly* (I hope not *impiously*) conceive we can manage all events, by our own wisdom and prudence.

That is just the case; (replied the doctor) but the truth seems to be, that man is continually sinning, and God is continually reforming; at least, giving man the means of reformation, by natural causes as they appear; but still under his immediate direction.

But may we not deprecate evils, which we think are coming upon us, (said Mr. Hales,) consistently with our belief in an over-ruling cause?

Submissively, I hope, we may, (replied the doctor;) we have the example of the great patriarchal seer, who deprecated the fate of Sodom.

Though the ruin may appear approaching, we know not what may yet be determined. God may not see the measure of our iniquity filled up, and may turn aside the evil. A gloomy prospect is not always followed by a storm. Human affairs often turn on the smallest pivots. How little we can foresee, is evident from the present state of our military affairs in Flanders. At the beginning of these troubles, no one thought the French, circumstanced as they were, could possibly hold out a year. Hypotheses were formed, and calculations made, which proved they must, in less time, be totally exhausted. They have held out two years already, and are, in appearance, stronger now than they were at first. Some slight circumstance, however, if it please God, may again as easily turn the balance against them.

But you do not yet (said Mr. Hales) entirely answer my difficulty. As we know these visitations are in the hands of God—as he alone directs them, and all the second causes on which they depend; and as we know likewise that he can only mean our good, does not every idea of interfering with them, even by prayer, seem rather an improper interposition?

Questions of this kind, which concern the dispensations of Providence, no doubt, my dear Sir, (answered Dr. Lucas) are beyond our power to answer with any satisfaction. Deprecatory prayer does indeed seem, as you observe, to oppose the decrees of God. But such difficulties may properly be styled *difficulties only of ignorance*. That such prayer is allowed, with humble submission, seems plain, from the example even of our blessed Lord himself: "Father, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, "not my will, but thine be done." Deprecatory prayer may be allowed for the sake of increasing our benevolence to man, and shewing our dependance on God. For aught we know, it may even tend to avert the evil, by being among those means which God has prescribed to that end.

But your answer (said Mr. Hales) seems to allow us only to deprecate the *approaching* evil. When it is already arrived—when the enemy has taken possession of our country, and is pillaging and destroying all before him, may we not still bewail, and deprecate, the evils we suffer? The consolations of religion are undoubt-

edly great; but are we to seek them in the dereliction of all other consolation?

In these great trials of our faith, my dear Sir, (said the doctor;) when God's judgments, in famine, pestilence, or the sword, are at our doors, woe be to us without the consolations of religion.—And, if we have these consolations, they will be found sufficient in all cases.—And why these evils should not fall on us, as well as on our neighbours, no reason, that I know, can be given. Why may not our houses be shattered by cannon-shot, or set on fire by hot balls, as well as those of the miserable people of Flanders?—Why may not we be pillaged, and over-run, as well as they?—our cattle, and means of subsistance, carried off?—Have we any good reason to believe we are more in favour with the Almighty?—We depend upon our insular situation, and our fleets, for protection; and, *humanly speaking*, we appear secure from danger:—But, can we suppose, that a narrow sea can defend us against God's power?—A storm, or a battle, may shatter our fleet, and give the enemy a decided superiority. Or the Almighty, in his grand store-house of events, hath various other means of humbling our pride.—I mention these

things only as a comment on the great and apostolic doctrine, *Be not high-minded, but fear.*—As to the question, how far we may deprecate an evil already arrived, it cannot be answered in few words. To bewail, and deprecate sin, and its future consequences, is certainly a true christian prayer. The national corruption, in which our own sins undoubtedly make a part, and which is the great source of the calamity, is at all times a call upon us for heavy humiliation. But, after we have done our best, and the evil is arrived, how far a good christian may bewail, and deprecate it, I dare not say. Submissively, I hope, he still may; as he knows not how far the destroying angel may be commissioned to act. But his *great endeavour* should be to receive God's correction, with full composure and resignation. It is God's means of *reformation*, and *amendment*. When you are ill, you submit to bleeding, and other disagreeable operations, in order to recover your health.—And, on the same principle, should you not acquiesce, humbly, in those dispensations of Providence, however severe, which are intended to produce national health? Would you wish to oppose Almighty benignity? Would you reject the only remedy to which the

malady can yield? Wickedness, arrived at such a height, can be checked only by national calamity. God corrects individual wickedness by affliction. But, when wickedness spreads largely, and becomes national, it calls for severer remedies.—In the mean time, the consolations of the christian are great. As he knows all events are in the hands of God, he knows they must, of course, be distributed with the utmost wisdom. God never can mean us evil. All this apparent evil is only the means of procuring good; and, shall we wish to oppose our *feelings* to God Almighty's *plans?* Shall we wish sin to increase and multiply, which, without these corrections from God, would certainly be the case? It is merely on worldly principles that our fears arise. Let us impress our minds, therefore, with the good events, which these corrections are intended to produce. What is the utmost we can suffer in this world, if it tend to prepare us for the happiness of the next?—I put it as a question: Should you wish to see the country rich, powerful, and victorious over its enemies; but, at the same time, corrupt, vicious, irreligious, and prophane?—Or, Should you wish to see it invaded, spoiled, and laid waste; but repentant

under the hand of Providence, awakened to a sense of guilt, and roused to reformation?

Why certainly, (said Mr. Hales) as you state the case, I ought, on principles of patriotism, to wish to see my country laid waste.

Whether our wickedness, (continued the doctor) is so general, as to be ripe for national calamity, God only knows. But assuredly when it is, the remedy is intended to work a cure; and, in numerous cases, undoubtedly will be effectual.—Do not you always feel, that heaven rises, as the world sinks?

No doubt, (said Mr. Hales,) we must all feel it, if we have any degree of feeling left. We can only regret our unwillingness to receive the remedy. Is it possible, think you, for any man, my dear sir, to carry his christianity so high, as to receive with cheerfulness the dispersion of his family—the spoiling of his goods—or the burning of his house?

No doubt it is, (said the doctor;) for we have it on record, that many *have* done it. *To take even joyfully the spoiling of our goods; knowing that in heaven we have a better and more enduring substance,** is one of the scriptural characters of a genuine christian. And, indeed, when we

* Hebrews x. 34.

consider what a mere point this world is, in comparison of eternity, it seems, in theory at least, to require no very high degree of christian fortitude to bear the sufferings of one, to fit us for the happiness of the other. When a thousand years have passed, and eternity is no nearer an end, than when it began, in what light shall we think (if we think at all of such things) of the trifling possessions we left behind in this world? How insignificant will they appear? how trifling the trade, and prosperity of nations—the power and grandeur of governments—the wisdom of legislators, the eloquence of senators—the schemes of patriots—the acts of heroes—the elegance of arts—and all the trifles, as they will then appear, which we value in this world?—All this should incite us to think of these things *now*, as we shall certainly *hereafter* think of them. *For* (as the apostle argues) *the time is short. It remaineth, that they who weep, be as though they wept not—and they who rejoice, as though they rejoiced not—and they that buy, as though they possessed not—and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away**.—Under views of this kind, all God's dispensations should

* 1st. Cor. VII. 29

be matter of holy, and cheerful resignation. I will not say we ought to take *joyfully the spoiling of our goods*, as *joy* perhaps, on these occasions, will not be expected from christians of a lower rank than apostles: but *cheerful resignation* will certainly be expected. Consider, then, the great ends of God's providence. He has nothing in view but our reformation and good; and let that make us *easy* at least, if it cannot make us *joyful*.

But, (said Mr. Hales,) we often hear of the infliction of evil, not merely as the means of reformation, bu tas God's judgment, and denunciation of punishment, and vengeance against sin.

No doubt, we do; (replied the doctor;) and this is a language often held out by the prophets of the old Testament. But still I apprehend, that even in the prophetic denunciations, the reformation of manners is chiefly respected. The gospel, however, throughout seems to give us this idea. *Suppose ye that these Galileans*, says our Saviour, *were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*—that is, repentance is the end to which these examples ought to lead us.—If, then, a nation cannot bear prosperity as it ought, but

grows wanton under it (as is always, I fear the case) how much better is it to be improved by adversity—by distress—or by calamity—as its circumstances call for a more, or less bitter draught of God's cup, than to be left to run on in a course of thoughtless riot, dissipation, and wickedness? *I spake to thee in thy prosperity*, (said God to his revolting people) *but thou saidst I will not hear.** As they *would not hear* in prosperity, their calamities commenced. We are next informed, that the army of the Chaldeans took the city; and swept off the inhabitants into captivity.

Aye, (said Mr. Hales,) I much fear, that this is a picture of our unhappy country; and that such will, at some time, be our catastrophe, if our penitence and reformation do not intervene. *God hath often spoken to us in our prosperity; and we have as often said, we will not hear.*

For my own part, (replied the doctor,) I cannot help thinking, God is bringing about some wonderful revolution in the world, by means of these enthusiastic infidels. *We* may not probably see the close of it; but they, who shall look at these events a century hence, may

* Jer. xxii. 21.

be able perhaps to trace somewhat more of these plans of Providence, which are now beginning to work; and may see, for aught I know, the accomplishment of some of the apocalyptic prophecies; which, till their accomplishment, we endeavour perhaps to interpret in vain: though most of them are already disposed of, I believe, by learned men. Whatever mischief the French have done, or however they may have overturned all order and religion, they have at least done one good thing,—they have totally rooted popery out of the country; and even this perhaps may lay a foundation for better times.

But in all these general catastrophes (said Mr. Hales) call them judgments—means of reformation—or what you please—the innocent and guilty suffer together. The impropriety of such undistinguishing events struck the great patriarchal sage: *Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked? That be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* * In these general calamities, you see, the mischief falls equally on him who wants more correction, and on him who wants less.

How so? (Said the doctor.) We have it on record, that *the Lord knows how to deliver the*

* Gen. xix. 25.

righteous; and we must allow, he hath various means of delivering them.—Besides, if they even suffer with the wicked in their calamities, what then? Suffering is to a man, as he feels it. What gives the keenest distress to one man, may give little uneasiness to another. Think you, that he who resigns himself piously to the will of heaven,—who detaches his affection from the things of this world—and looks up with holy joy to a heavenly retribution—feels as much from the *spoiling of his goods*, as he who sets his heart upon them, and has no idea of happiness, but what his goods are to furnish?—By no means, certainly. So that God, from the *same* cup, you see, can easily administer different draughts. However, with questions of this kind we have little to do. They belong to a cabinet, to which we have no access.

Aye, that cabinet, (said Mr. Hales,) contains secrets, which the *angels themselves desire to look into*.—But, among all these secrets, still few things puzzle me so much, as the inequality with which these judgments of God seem to be dispensed. I acquiesce in what you say with regard to individuals. Suffering is certainly greatly mitigated by the manner in which it is

felt. But how are we to account for the inequality with which the dispensations of God *seem* to be ordered towards different nations? How are we to account for this inequality, when we see, for instance, an innocent nation, as it appears the Hindoos are, anihilated almost by the sword, or by a famine, while another nation, dissolved in luxury, dissipation, and vice, enjoys all the happiness that prosperity can give?

Aye, (said the doctor,) these enquiries belong not to us. When misery befalls a nation, apparently innocent, it is, no doubt, a greater difficulty, than when it befalls a nation apparently corrupt.—We must however religiously resolve all these things into a belief, that the judge of all the world must do right.—Thus far, however, we may observe, that when any light is thrown, in the New Testament, upon any of the dispensations of providence, they are always marked with that sort of *uncertainty*, which excites our wonder. So that, apparent uncertainty is really one of the characteristics of the dispensations of providence. You remember that remarkable passage, in which our Lord says, *there shall be two in the field*—that is, I suppose, in circumstances apparently the same—*when one shall be*

taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. *And the reason is given. *Watch, therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known, in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.*— That is, if we always knew the exact period of each dispensation of Providence, and the exact reason for it, we should not always be prepared. It is the uncertainty, therefore, which keeps us always on the watch. Depend upon it, however, that God's severities to man are always just, and proportioned to his wants. No one suffers more than he deserves; nor more than it is necessary for him to suffer. All we have to do, therefore, is to fit ourselves by holy lives, and pious resignation, for every event; and our trust in the mercies of God should be our great comfort.

Aye, my dear Sir, (said Mr. Hales) that is the only philosophy that can make us happy. God grant we may all *live* up to it, and *suffer* agreeably to it, when God

* Matthew xxiv. 40.

puts us to the trial. But there is one little circumstance which I cannot help mentioning to you, as a matter which affects me. This country, with all its vices, is a charitable country; and there are many kind foundations, for the education of poor children; and among them my little parish endowments, of which you have often heard me speak. Now, it would greatly add to the distresses arising from a confusion of public affairs, to have all these little pleasing sources of charitable education cut off, and the country thrown again into a state of ignorance and barbarism.

Leave all these matters, my dear Sir, (said the doctor) to God Almighty. Why should you distress yourself about them? So far as *you* are concerned, God reads the intention of your heart, and will reward it according to its sincerity.—And, as for the *public*, consider within how limitted a compass your benevolence, and that of others, can extend. You are providing for the religious education of a few parish-children; whereas, God, by sending the whole nation to the school of calamity, corrects, and amends millions. Consider, then, only *who* it is, that frustrates your benevolent designs; and you

cannot be much distressed at seeing them superseded by schemes of infinitely more benevolence.

It is very true; (said Mr. Hales) in that and every thing else, we should be resigned.

And, (continued the doctor) I shall just add, that we should not only be resigned, but, as a test of our resignation, we should preserve our christian temper throughout. Even the enemy that invades us, is God's instrument; and though self-defence is lawful, yet hatred is absolutely forbidden. You see, (concluded the doctor) summing up the whole argument, I have considered evils in the worst light. They may, or they may not, arrive. In the mean time, let us not fret ourselves with foreseeing them. To *us*, at least, who are not concerned in public affairs, and cannot prevent these evils, they are *God's will*—and to God's will ours should submit.

Here the conversation ended. Mr. Hales professed himself much composed with it, and said, he would endeavour for the future to remove from his mind (whatever events might fall out) those gloomy ideas which had taken possession of him.

ON

EQUALITY OF STATIONS,

A DIALOGUE.

On Equality of Stations.

JOHN MITCHEL was a respectable day labourer. His father dying early, he was brought up by an uncle, who kept a little school in a country village, and taught him to read; and, at his death, left him a few books. John had good natural sense—and, having always been fond of reading, he had acquired more knowledge, than was common in his rank of life.

His love for reading, however, did not interfere with his business. He was one of the most industrious men in the parish; and could turn his hand to many things besides his spade and his flail. He could temper clay, and build a cottage better than any man in the country. He was an excellent thatcher; he understood something of gardening also; and could prune

a tree with great nicety. By these occupations, which were entirely owing to his own skill and industry, he added something to the profits of his day-labour: and as he never went to the ale-house, but always carried his money home, he maintained a wife, and five children, very comfortably. Thus being content and cheerful, he enjoyed more happiness in his cottage, than is often found under a better roof.

About this time, one Thomas Payne, a fellow who, by flying abroad, escaped justice at home, left, in revenge, as a legacy to his country, a treatise, intitled the *Rights of Man.* It was a very artful book; and though written on no foundation of reason or argument, was so happily addressed to the common people, that, by infusing *notions of equality* among them, it occasioned a general discontent.

Though John Mitchel had too much good sense, and too good a heart, to wish to raise any disturbance in his country, yet his mind was not a little infected with these principles; but as he was naturally a silent man, he kept his opinions pretty much to himself.

No person in the parish was more in favour with doctor Lucas, than John Mitchel. He

was, indeed, the doctor's right-hand man—had the management of his glebe; and access to him at all times. The doctor would often say, he thought him a more agreeable companion, than he commonly found among the gentry of the country. He used also to lend him books, chiefly religious, and would explain passages to him which he did not understand.

It was not long, before the doctor thought he had some reason to suspect, that Tom Payne's book had made some impression on John; and he determined to take the first opportunity to talk with him on the subject. Accordingly, one Sunday, after evening service, he carried John home with him, and taking him into his study, stirred the fire, and seating him on one side, he sat down himself on the other.

He then hinted his suspicion, and wished John would explain himself fully on the subject.

John was a little surprised at what the doctor said; as he assured him, he had never spoken a word, to his knowledge, on the subject to any body; for he never wished to have a hand in any disturbances; nor ever wished to see any take place, as he believed there was no knowing where people would stop. However as the

doctor had asked his opinion, he owned he thought it hard, that one half of the world should ride upon the backs of the other half—and that on one side, there should be all the labour, and all the drudgery, and all the hardships—and on the other, all the plenty, and all the comfort, and all the enjoyment. The poor man was obliged to work for a maintenance on hard fare, both in hot weather and cold: while the rich man refreshed himself with his cooling drink in summer; and sat at his ease, with his book, by a good fire in winter. I own, said, John, this seems to me rather hard; and I cannot account for it in any way, that *is satisfactory*.

Can you account, (said the doctor,) in any way, that *is satisfactory*, for the strength and vigour of some men; while others are naturally of a sickly constitution, and unable to bear any fatigue? Can you account in any way, that *is satisfactory*, for the sense and wit, which some men are born with; while others are scarce removed above fools and drivellers? Can you give a reason, why some people are destined to live in parts of the earth, where scarce any thing grows that can serve either for food or raiment; and where, through one half of the

year, they hardly see the light of the sun; while others live in the happiest climates, and abound in all the productions of nature? If you cannot account for all these things, and yet find they are permitted by God Almighty (whose wisdom and goodness, I am sure, you will not dispute) why should you take offence at seeing one man placed in a higher station than another? The difference here is not nearly so great as in these other instances.

All this John allowed to be true. But still he thought there was a difference between God's work and man's work. All the instances, said he, Sir, which you have given, are properly God's work; but making different stations among mankind, is man's doing.

I do not see that (said the doctor.) Government implies difference of station; for there can be no government without it: and we have scriptural authority for saying, that government is derived from God, so that of course different stations also are derived from God.

But, Sir, (said Mitchel,) I think we have scriptural authority also for having *all things in common*. As soon as the Christian religion began to be established, we understand, the

first thing done, was for the rich to sell what they had, and make a fund for the good of the whole; which implied, I think, an equality among them.

But do you consider, my good neighbour, (replied the doctor,) of what kind of people this society consisted, which had *all things in common?* They were all true, sincere Christians. And if the whole world was composed of such people, I should be for equality likewise. No inconvenience could arise from it. There would be then no occasion for government. Every man would carry that law about him, which would secure his neighbour from injury.—Besides, you must consider, that this equality was then merely *voluntary.* You remember what St. Peter tells Ananias, that his possessions, both before and after the sale, were in his own power; so that there was no *Gospel-precept* in the case.—And still farther, you may consider, that the relief was intended only as a present support. The people, who had all things thus in common, were cut off probably from much of their other support, as many of the early Christians, at that time, we know, were.

I see, very plainly, Sir, (said Mitchel,) the

truth of all you have said: but still I do not rest entirely on that. I think it seems to have been our Saviour's wish, to have things brought upon a level. He talks of rich men as not being able *to enter the kingdom of heaven*; and bids one of them, who came to know what he was to do, *sell what he had, and give it to the poor.*

It is very true, (said the doctor;) and riches certainly create many temptations, which obstruct men in their virtuous pursuits; and this was all our Saviour meant by saying, that rich men could not *enter into the kingdom of God.* And that is a very good reason for the poor man, if he have a true sense of religion, to be satisfied with his condition; and not to wish for that wealth, which might be a snare to him.—As to the particular case you mention, of the rich man who came to our Saviour, we must not construe such cases into general precepts. Our Saviour was trying the faith of a forward young man, and made an appeal to his own heart, whether he loved the kingdom of heaven, or the things of this world better. At the same time, no doubt, the precept goes so far as to instruct all rich men, that their riches

are not so much intended for their own use, as to be of service to their indigent neighbours.

But, Sir, (said Mitchel,) what do you make of what St. Paul somewhere says about an equality? I forget the place, but I remember what he says about those who had *gathered much, and had nothing over*; and about those *who had gathered little, and had no lack.* Now, Sir, this always struck my fancy, (I hope, Sir, you will excuse me,) as if the apostle had compared mankind to a great many vessels of water, unequally full; but the over-full ones being poured into the empty ones, all were brought to one level.

You have explained your own meaning, (replied the doctor,) very well; but I doubt whether you have explained the apostle's. Reach me that Testament, and I will shew you the passage you allude to. It is in the eighth chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, and at the fourteenth verse. Now, in the first place, you see the apostle is not ordering an equality, but is only directing the charity of the rich. Then, again, you see throughout this whole passage, especially if you turn to the 7th verse of the following chapter, that no *necessity* is laid upon any one. All are left to follow their own *inclinations.* Their charity is considered merely

as a matter of bounty; and they are required to give only as *they purposed in their hearts*, and according to their ability. But since, (continued the doctor,) you seem desirous of having the authority of Scripture for bringing men upon an equality, let us examine a little more closely what the Scripture says on that subject. It is not *particular cases* and *particular texts*, which I should consult. Without attending to the context, they may mislead us. I should wish you rather to consider the *whole tenor*, and *scope* of Scripture. You will find, that so far from enjoining men to live on an equality, it always supposes men to live in different stations; and that its rules, instructions, and prohibitions, are all formed on this very idea. God Almighty gives men, you read, different talents,—to one ten—to another five—and to a third but one. We are ordered to submit to governors—servants are instructed to be obedient to their masters; and masters to behave properly to their servants. The rich are ordered to give plenteously—the poor are instructed, in whatever station they are placed, *therewith to be content*. And our Saviour, and his apostles who bore the hardships of the lowest station, are held out

to us as examples. Many vices too are forbidden in Scripture, which could not exist in a state of equality. Covetousness, for instance, could not exist, if there was nothing to covet: nor envy, if no man had more than another: nor pride, if all men were on the same footing. And you must allow, that when a vice is forbidden in Scripture, it certainly implies, that men are liable to fall into it. In short, the whole system of our duty to man, and, indeed, the whole scheme of a state of trial, proceeds on a supposition, that a variety of stations exist among mankind. To the new Testament we might add the old, which, throughout, considers things in the same light. Would God, think you, have permitted his faithful Abraham to possess so much wealth, and keep such a number of servants, if it had been a thing disagreeable to him? Would he have given the other patriarchs such large possessions? or have advanced Joseph, Moses, and other great and good men, to superior places of trust and power, if he had meant to reduce all people to the same level? Or would the prophet Elisha, think you, have kept Gehazi for his servant, or have encouraged the rich Shunamite, if he had seen any thing wrong in superiority of station? I

chuse only examples from such holy persons as have been approved of God: so that you see it is plain, neither the old Testament nor the new, gives the least encouragement to bring mankind to an equality. These considerations, therefore, ought to shew us, in what light we should look at the things of this world. All good Christians will be satisfied with their station in life, as it is that which is appointed them by God. They must not say, I wish for this, or I will have that: but must, with religious submission, take the lot which God Almighty hath given them, and make the best use of it for their own improvement. They must, in short, consider this world only as a pilgrimage, through which they are passing. They must learn from their religion, to consider its possessions, whether they are in high life, or in low, as of little value in themselves, as their means of trial only; and must look up for their final retribution to those eternal mansions, which God has given them in prospect.

I see all this very clearly, (said Mitehel;) yet still, Sir, in spite of all our reasoning, it is continually rising up in my mind,—Why should God Almighty give one man so much more the means of happiness, even in this world, than

he gives another? Though we are to seek our full reward in the next world; yet surely, Sir, as God means this world, in some degree, for a state of happiness also, why should we not all share and share alike in it.

I verily believe we do, (said the doctor.) I am of opinion, that, as far as a station goes, God Almighty has divided happiness very equally among mankind. There are miserable people, and happy people, in all stations; and their happiness, in all stations, depends greatly on their religion, prudence, and industry. What is happiness? Do you think it consists in a fine house—in keeping much company—in having a number of servants, and living splendidly?

Why no, Sir, (said Mitchel,) I do not suppose it does. When gentlemen are used to these things, the pleasure goes off; and, I fancy, they do not much mind them. But I think happiness cannot well consist, where there is not a belly-full of victuals—or where there is constant fear of wanting it.

I think so too; (said the doctor,) but I believe distress, *arising from mere want*, is seldom felt by the virtuous and industrious. And those distresses which arise from vice and imprudence are, I believe, just as commonly found

among people in high stations, as in low. I could name you two or three gentlemen of large fortunes, who are at a loss sometimes for money to go to market; and are afraid even to stir out of their houses, for fear of a bailiff.

Why, yes, sir, (said Mitchel,) I believe there is one, not very far from this place. I did not however mean to deny, that imprudence and folly may bring a man to distress in any station: but I fear there are many poor people, who are frugal and industrious; and yet, having large families, are hard put to it, with all their industry and frugality, to maintain them.

During the early part of their lives, (replied the doctor,) till their families grow up, they may be rather hard put to it, as you say, to maintain them. But if they be sober, virtuous, and industrious, I should hope they will never be much distressed. In the time of their necessity, they will always meet with friends in such a country as this. With regard to yourself, John, you have as little to live on as most people; and have had as little assistance. You have only the labour of your own hands; and have four children to maintain, or five, I forget which.

Five, Sir, (said John.)

And yet, I hope, (replied the doctor,) you are able to say, you never knew what want was.

As to myself, sir, (said Mitchel,) I have no reason to complain. God has always been very kind to me. I have often, no doubt, lived sparingly enough, and have pinched in one thing, when I wanted another. But in the hardest times, I never was without a loaf of bread in the house, a bit of cheese, and a pan of potatoes.

And that spare diet, (said the doctor,) with exercise, has kept you from many a disease, which intemperance brings on the rich.

I believe so, Sir, (said Mitchel.)

And your children, (continued the doctor,) who may have had, sometimes, only a belly-full of bread, look fresher, and are probably more healthy, than those who were fed and nursed with the tenderest care.

Aye, Sir, (said Mitchel;) many a time have my wife and I said so to each other, when we have looked at their little ruddy faces, and given each of them a luncheon of bread, which they would eat heartily—and then, poor little souls, go to the pump, and wash it down with a drink of water. Between you and me, Sir, I would

not change the looks of my children for the little pale faces, as white as their coats, that I see on a Sunday, getting out of Sir Thomas's coach.

True, (said the doctor;) and you may consider farther the great difficulty which the rich often have in getting their children put out in the world. The poor provide easily for their families; their children want only health and strength to get forward. Necessity soon settles them. Whereas the children of the rich, being bred with higher notions, and being, of course, more ungovernable, often give their parents much trouble, and put them to great expenses.

Aye, Sir, (said Mitchel,) I fear poor Sir Thomas has seen enough of that. He wished the young squire to turn to something, as it may be several years before he comes to his estate; and was at a great expense in getting a place for him in London to learn to be a lawyer; but I fear he got into mischief, so that matter was given up. And as to master Robert, I fear he will never come to good. He has been at three places already; and, as I hear, is likely to stick to nothing but hunting and shooting.

I fear so, indeed, (said the doctor;) but now,

my good neighbour, do not you see what advantage the poor have, in this matter, over the rich? You see how creditably, and how easily, your neighbour Hickson has gotten three of his children provided for. The girl with us, my wife says, is already a great favourite with her.

Aye, Sir, (answered Mitchel,) if we could all get our children into such places as Betty Hickson has got, it would be happy; but there is so much wickedness among farmers' lads, and in farmers' houses, that one dreads sending their children to such places.

As to that, (replied the doctor,) your children run no greater risk, than the children of the rich, and all other children. The great point is, to give them a good education at home; and one of the best parts of a good education, is a good example; youth are much more inclined to *imitate* than to *learn*. Example, therefore, makes the strongest impression. The young heir, though ever so well instructed, if he see his parents run into every expensive pleasure, and follow every amusement that offers, will think the example the easiest part to copy; while the cottage-lad, who hath had no instruction beyond his testament, yet having constantly

before his eye a pious, sober, and industrious father, will insensibly transplant his virtues into himself.

I believe so, truly, Sir, (replied Mitchel.)

Why then, again, (said the doctor,) there is another point in which the poor have a great advantage over the rich. They are free from the cares and vexations which tenants, and repairs, and servants, and horses, and hounds, and the preservation of game, and all the accompaniments of a great estate bring with them. Depend upon it, John, it is no little care, and no little anxiety, that attend the possessing, and the spending of a great estate.

I believe so, Sir, (said Mitchel.)

You see then, (said the doctor,) that if the poor man have not so many pleasures as the rich man, he has not so many pains; and that brings things to a balance.

I believe so, Sir, (said Mitchel.)

Then again, (added the doctor,) with regard to the next world; (I mention this consideration to you, John, because I know you are a serious man;) the poor have certainly fewer temptations to be wicked, than the rich. Whatever the rich man may think of it, he has a strict account to

give of the talents he has received: and if, instead of being of use to others with his talents, he *wraps them up in a napkin*, as the Scripture phrases it, that is, spends them all upon himself, woe be to him! A time will come, when he will wish, poor soul, he had rather been Lazarus at the gate, than himself within, *cloathed in purple* and *fine linen*, and *faring sumptuously every day*. And when we see how very few rich men spend their fortunes as they ought, we have good cause for satisfaction that we are not of the number. In the mean time, the poor man who lives contentedly in his station, who does his duty, *and walks humbly with his God*, will be received hereafter into equal favour with him, who hath done his best with better means. God graciously tells us, he accepts the willing mind; and receives a man *according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not*. And the story of the widow's mite seems purposely given to us, as an example of these gracious declarations, and an encouragement to the poor to trust in God's favour. And now, my good neighbour, added the doctor, on laying all these things together, if the poor man have not reason to rejoice in his low station, I think, you

must at least allow that he has reason to be satisfied with it; and that, as far as station is concerned, all men may have equally the means of happiness in their own power.

Why yes, Sir, (answered Mitchel,) I believe so. I think you have plainly made it out, that the chief unhappiness among mankind, does not arise from their being richer or poorer, but from their being imprudent and wicked.

You may add, from their being *discontented* too, (said the doctor;) for discontent is one of the most common causes of unhappiness. There are difficulties in all stations—both in high life, and in low: and the generality of people, thinking to avoid their old difficulties, and obtain new pleasures, are continually craving after some situation above them. And if they obtain it, the pleasure passes away, while new difficulties, and new desires produce new discontent. Thus all the world is set a gadding after change; whereas we should consider, that every station, as well as that in which we are placed, has its difficulties; and that it is probable we should meet with still greater difficulties in a new state, to which we were unaccustomed, than in our old one, to which use must have reconciled us.

This seems to be a *truth*; and men would be wise to form it into a *practical one.* Numberless instances occur of men, who have suddenly made large fortunes, and have found themselves entangled in so many new difficulties, that they have wished again for their old situation. Whereas he who is content, shuts in all his desires; and will not allow himself to suppose, he can be happier in any state than in his present one; and if happiness is to be found any where, I think it is to be found in such a state as that.

What you say, Sir, (said Mitchel,) I believe is very true. I remember a shoe-maker, a very industrious man, who used to sit whistling at his work all day long, perfectly happy, as it seemed, and contented; when a great fortune suddenly came to him by the death of an uncle. Oh! how all his neighbours envied him. He immediately left off his business, and became a gentleman. But he was not fit to keep company with gentlemen; for he knew nothing, as they say, *beyond his last*; and having no pursuit, he was continually wishing to obtain some sort of happiness, though he knew not what. In the mean time, all the happiness which his riches

could obtain for him, was to sit constantly at a neighbouring ale-house; where, in two or three years, he drank himself into a dropsy, and died.

Poor man! (said the doctor,) he was to be pitied. He may be a warning, however, and an example to teach us that, in general, we are happiest in those situations to which we have been accustomed, and which use hath rendered familiar to us. Here and there a miserable person, either in high life or low, may be found, who might probably change his situation for the better; but, in general, I believe it is otherwise: except when by some extreme of vice, or ill-conduct, we draw our misery upon ourselves.

I believe so Sir, (said Mitchel;) but this is no very strong argument, I think, against an equality of stations; for when all are reduced to a level, there can be no great fortune you know, Sir, any where.

It is true, (replied the doctor;) but the same effect would, in a great measure, be produced by an equality. The generality of people, you see, would rise suddenly from one state to another; and not being introduced to the change, whatever it is, in a gradual manner,

they would lose the advantages of their former situation, like the shoemaker, without being able to enjoy the latter. It is the *sudden change*, which is the mischief. Considered in this light, therefore, an equality of station would most probably be a great source of unhappiness. Suppose, John, you had a large fortune left you; I believe you would be puzzled to know what to do with it.

I believe I should, Sir, (replied Mitchel.) But suppose I should have a moderate fortune left me just enough to enable me to live better, than I do.

Why, I think, my good neighbour, (returned the doctor,) even that might be dangerous. It might give you a turn for idleness. You like reading; and it might tempt you to spend more time in reading than you ought; then again, your children thinking they had now something to live on, though divided among them it would be of little value, would be tempted to be idle likewise. Whereas now, following the industrious example of their father, and knowing they have nothing but their own hands to depend on, they may, by the blessing of God, fill their station hereafter as creditably as their father has done.

Why indeed, Sir, (saidMitchel,) I believe things are better as they are. Nobody can tell what may happen in a new station. Madam Morris sent our little Jenny a new cap, and it gave her so many conceited notions, that I was fain to take it from her again.

Aye, (said the doctor,) wiser heads than poor little Jenny's are often turned with fine things. Many a man is happier in a poor coat, than he who wears a rich one. You will consider farther, (continued the doctor,) that equality of stations would be a great check to industry; and keep all the powers of the mind at a stand. You send your boys to school, and have them taught to read, and write, and cast accounts, and would be glad to have them raise themselves, by their merit, to be stewards, or clerks in offices, or to something better than a day-labourer: and it is common enough to see low people rise by their abilities to some higher station; which coming gradually on, is attended with less mischief. But if an equality should take place, there would be no room for people to exert their several talents.

I believe so indeed, Sir, (said Mitchel.)

After all, (continued the doctor,) we make

much more of this world than it deserves. What is a high station, or a low station, to that man who considers the world as a pilgrimage—as a journey to mansions of everlasting happiness! The grand point is to make our station in this world, whatever it is, the means of procuring this happy station hereafter.

Aye, Sir, (said Mitchel, clasping his hands,) this is the grand point indeed. If I *fully trust* in eternity, what is this world, or any of its concerns to me!

Having settled this point then, (continued the doctor,) and being convinced that, as far as *our own* happiness is concerned, things could not be better than they are, let us next consider how an equality of stations would affect *society*. If men were *now* like the primitive Christians of *old*, as we just observed, a state of equality would be desirable. But in a world abounding in wickedness, as it now does, men could not live without laws and magistrates. The whole world would be turned into robbers, and banditti; or into sufferers from their rapine. Do you remember what is related in the 17th, 18th, and 19th chapters of the book of Judges, when *every one did that which was right in his own*

*eyes?**—that is, when they committed all kinds of wickedness: and the reason is given, they were all, as it were, on an equality. There was no magistrate to keep wickedness under restraint.—Then again, consider, that the well-being of society requires different arts, trades, and professions. We must have lawyers, physicians, soldiers, and divines, as well as artificers, and labourers. But if all things were on an equality, we could have none of these distinctions. And yet they are all absolutely necessary for the good of the whole. Take any of these several orders away, and there will be a void in the community; which, more or less, all will feel. So that when the lower stations murmur at the higher, they see not, that they are murmuring against their own interest.—There is a pleasing story told on this subject, of the *head and the members*,† in the history of the Romans, which perhaps you have not met with.

* Judges 17. 6.—Judges 18. 7.

† This story is commonly told of the *belly and the members:* but the doctor tells it of the *head and the members*—whether he had made a mistake—or thought that, in this way, it made a better story.

I do not recollect it, Sir, (said Mitchel.)

Some seditious fellow, (continued the doctor,) like Tom Payne, had put it into the heads of the common people of Rome, in ancient times, that all the lands of the city ought to be divided equally among them: for why should one man, (they cried,) have an estate of 300 acres, and another have only a little plot of three?—In short, things had arisen to such a height, that all government and order were at an end: the people refused to work, and the city was threatened with a famine. In this exigence, one of the magistrates, calling the people together, said, he had sent for them to tell them a story. It happened once, (continued he,) that a violent quarrel arose among the several parts of the human body. The legs and arms declared, they would be servants to the head no longer. All the labour, they cried, and all the difficulty is put upon us; while you amuse yourself with looking about, and seeing, and hearing every thing that pleases you; and are at no more trouble in providing for your maintenance, than in opening your mouth, which we fill. We are resolved therefore to be your slaves no longer. Listen, my good friends, a moment to me, said

the mouth. Are you no way obliged to the eyes, for directing your motions—nor to the ears, for procuring you intelligence of every thing that concerns you;—nor to me for being your spokesman on all occasions;—ordering every thing for your good—and taking in that food, which tends equally to the nourishment of us all? Depend upon it, we are as useful to you, as you are to us.—It is said, the Roman people were so struck with the aptness, and propriety of this fable, that every seditious word was stifled—Tom Payne was tossed in a blanket; and order was immediately restored.

Indeed, (said Mitchel, laughing,) I think it is a very good story: and I do not wonder, that it had its effect. If the poor will not work, no doubt the rich must starve; but the poor must starve with them.

Undoubtedly, (said the doctor;) for consider, John, if they even should work in a state of equality, how are people to be supplied with what they want? Is every man to raise provisions for himself; to manufacture all the articles he uses of cloaths, masonry, iron-work, and other necessaries?

That is impossible, Sir, (said Mitchel.) But

suppose every man should take a separate article?

Why then, (replied the doctor,) who is to fix each man to his particular article? If all were on an equality, they would all naturally chuse the easiest: and as many employments are difficult and dangerous, as mining, and making gunpowder, for instance, who do you think would undertake such employments, unless they were, in some way, urged to it? Now in society, there will always be among the lower orders needy people, who for high wages will undertake such employments.

That is very true, Sir, (said Mitchel.)

Besides, (continued the doctor,) you know, John, there are many kinds of business, which cannot be carried on without a large stock; and this cannot be had in a state of equality. Even a mill to grind our corn, requires more money, than could be raised where there were not some people in good circumstances. A little matter will not build it, and make a water-course, and fit it for use.

That is very true, Sir, (said Mitchel.)

Besides, (added the doctor,) if every man dealt only in that small way, which equality would allow, he must carry his little overplus to market,

as soon as he could, to exchange it for what he wanted. But how would that supply the market? *Now*, the poorer farmer is obliged to sell his corn immediately, to pay his rent. The richer brings his corn in gradually, and so the market is regularly supplied; and this is for the good of all. But if we suppose all men on an equal footing, there is nothing to prevent their bringing in their corn, as expeditiously as they could: and you will easily conceive that in that case the market would either be glutted, or starved: and that of course would be the fate also of the people, who went to market.

I see it, Sir, very plainly, (replied Mitchel:) for as every body would be in want of something, he would be in haste to have his own wants supplied, as soon as he could.

Just so, (said the doctor.) You see therefore, plainly, that rich people are a kind of store-houses for the poor, and prevent their starving; which would otherwise be the case. For though there is much waste among the rich; yet their prodigality is in few hands, compared with the multitude. Besides, much of what falls from them, is scattered by labour, or other means, among the poor themselves.

I believe indeed, Sir, (said Mitchel,) that if every thing was in the hands of the multitude, there would soon be great waste, and great want.

Aye, certainly, (said the doctor;) every one would catch at what he could get, as soon as he could, without waiting for the season. The apples that grow in the hedge, you know, are never suffered to ripen. Who would sow his corn, think you, if another was to reap it? So that, in fact, a state of equality would both lessen the stock of provisions, and prevent what was raised from coming to maturity. But even suppose all these matters, which we have been discussing, could be well adjusted, it is impossible that a state of equality could exist a week together. Suppose, that all things were, at this instant, reduced to a level, what would be the effect? One man is industrious, and saves his money; another is a profligate, and spends it. By degrees the industrious man gathers up a new stock; and, by the same degrees, the thriftless man becomes a beggar. What is to to be done next? Must a new state of rapine succeed, to bring every man again on an equality? In that case, you see, whatever we may suffer from the oppressions of government, we should

suffer much more from the oppressions of each other. I appeal to your own feelings. You do not abound with the things of this world; yet as you are an industrious man, you have more than many people have; and should not, perhaps, like to have half a dozen needy ruffians come every two or three days, and seize the little matters about you, as fast as you had collected them.

Certainly, Sir, (answered Mitchel,) I should be much hurt at seeing my family robbed at once of the fruits of my labour.

Well, then, (said the doctor,) is it not reasonable that others, who may have, with equal integrity, acquired more than you, should be equally desirous of keeping, what they have acquired? The security of property is one of the chief ends of society: it gives an advantage, no doubt, to the rich; but it gives an advantage also to the poor. If this security were taken from one class, it would soon be taken from all—and every thing would be in confusion. Let us, then, confess, (continued the doctor,) that it is absolutely impossible for a state of equality to subsist in this world.

The very nature of man is such, that we cannot subsist in a state of equality.*

I can easily believe it, Sir, (said Mitchel.)—But yet, on the other hand, it seems hard, that men should suffer from those, whom they pay for protecting them. What do you think, Sir, if I may be bold to ask, of our present government? I hear many people complain that taxes are so high, they can hardly buy soap, and candles, or get shoes to their feet, or a drop of beer to drink.

That is all very true, (said the doctor;) the times are hard; but notwithstanding that, people who are frugal, and industrious, may still live tolerably well, as you are, yourself, an example. And if they can, it may be better, perhaps, for the people in general, that they have not so much to spend. To many people, a little increase of property would be an advantage. It would to you, because you know how to use it; but if the mass of the people had more than they have, it is very probable their

* "Did not the commons rise in Richard II.'s time? and, "under pretence of having all *things common*, did they not "fall to spoiling and robbing?"

Life of Wolsey, by Sir William Cavendish.

families would not, in general, be much the better for it; they would only spend more in idleness, and drinking. I have been assured, that in manufacturing towns, and other places, where high wages are given, the body of workmen seldom employ more than half the week, and spend the other half in drinking. As to the taxes, I suppose you know what they are?

I have heard, Sir, (said Mitchel,) they are the interest, which the government pays to those people, who have lent them money to carry on wars.

They are, (replied the doctor;) and you see it would be as much injustice to destroy the taxes, as to take away a person's estate. After paying this interest, the remainder of the taxes goes to support the government.

But I have often heard, Sir, (said Mitchel,) that the taxes might be much lessened, if there was not so much money spent in places among great people; I have heard, also, that there are great faults in government;—and that things might be much better managed, than they are; many people will tell you, that kings are of no use; consuming a vast deal of money for no good;—that noblemen should all be put

down; that parliament-men are chosen by bribery; and when they get into the Parliament House, think of nothing but selling their votes for places;---that much money is spent in getting votes, and pensioning voters;—and that many other wrong things are done, which greatly want to be mended.—How far this is the case, an ignorant man, like me, cannot possibly understand. But I hear much of it; and if it be the case, should there not, Sir, be some method taken to put things on a better footing?

These are questions, my honest neighbour, (said the doctor,) which would require volumes to answer. But I will endeavour to give you such an answer as I can, in few words.—You have some little tendency, I think, to what they call *republican principles*; which is only a sort of different name for *equality*. But I could wish you to think better of the government of your own country, than you do; for however slighted it may be at home, it is considered abroad as one of the freest, and best governments on earth. As to those, who have been born and bred under a republican government, let them continue under it: but a republic, grafted on a monarchy, can hardly fail, for some time at least, to degenerate

into a tyranny. This was the case, as you must often have heard, in Cromwell's time. And this is the case of the French nation at *present*, into whatever form they may settle *hereafter*.—You say, you have heard kings are of no use. I'll tell you one great use, that arises from kings; and which, if they are properly restrained, is worth all the expense that attends them. Factions are the ruin of states; and whether is it more likely, think you, that factions will arise, when a number of men are nearly on an equality—or when one is so highly advanced, that no other can be a competitor with him? The nobility, you have heard, should be put down. But are our honest neighbours, who talk this language, politicians enough, think you, to know how, far the House of Lords are a useful check upon the House of Commons? You can easily conceive, that in the management of a great house, it is very necessary to have one part a check upon another—the steward a check upon the servants—and the master upon the steward; and why cannot you conceive it to be as useful in a government? It is very possible, that if we had no House of Lords, the Commons might do many improper things; and we might have more

wrongnesses in the government than we now have. That Parliament-men are often ill-chosen—that they often vote, as they are paid—that there is too much money consumed in pensions, and places—and that many other things are very wrong, I have no doubt; and if we could have them rectified with a wish, it were well. But reformation is a matter that requires the greatest caution. When once an opening is made, every reformer has his own scheme—contentions arise—and it is impossible to say to what length they may be carried. So that, except in cases of great necessity, we should not be hasty in our struggles for reformation. We should rather keep in mind, that neither government, nor any thing else in this world, is in a state of perfection; and this should prevent our being too attentive to little matters. And though I think with you, that many abuses exist in our government, yet still I do not think there are any that should make us run the risk of throwing things into confusion, by our endeavours to make them better. Our religion, liberty, and property, are still safe. Besides, an old crazy constitution like ours, cannot bear to be tampered with. Luxury and vice are come

to a great height amongst us; and would set afloat so many bad humours, that I should fear the consequence. The great want of reformation, John, is in the morals of the people at large. Here we should first seek amendment. To begin with the government, is beginning at the wrong end. Till we amend ourselves, I fear we shall never be able to amend the government. Wicked men will always be ready to take the lead; and to make things worse than they found them.* We have a dreadful

* The following is Sir William Waller's account of the conclusion of affairs, after the civil wars of Charles I.

" After the expense of so much blood, and treasure, all the " difference, that can be observed between our former, and " present state, is this, that before, under the complaint of " slavery, we lived like freemen; and now, under the " notion of freemen, we live like slaves; enforced by " continual taxes and oppressions, to feed our own misery. " I deny not, but some things, in the frame of our state, " may be amiss. But is there no mean between the tooth- " ache and the plague? Was there no way to effect this " without bruising the whole kingdom in a mortar? and " making it into a new paste?

From the Earl of Warrington's speech to the grand jury of Wiltshire.

" ——Experience has taught us, that no sort of govern- " ment, but that under which we now live, will suit with

instance before us of the mischief of faction. When the French, oppressed by their government, reduced the kingly power, all people applauded the opposition they made. They set out with ideas of liberty among themselves, and equity to their neighbours. But very soon all this moderation got into the hands of a faction, which became the most grievous of all oppressors. Religion was laid entirely aside; the very

" England. Let us but consider the late civil wars between " Charles I. and his parliament. How many different kinds of " government were set up, one after the other. All ways " were tried, but nothing would do, till we returned to our " old way."

From Mr. Howel's account of England, during the Republic, we learn, that

" The king's subjects are now become perfect slaves. " These parliamentary saints think they may lawfully rob " any that adheres to them. 'Tis a mass of money those " reformers have squandered in a few years. They often " promised, and solemnly voted, a public account to sa- " tisfy the kingdom; but in this, as in a hundred other " things, they have dispensed with their votes, they have " consumed more public treasure, (as I am credibly told) " than all the kings of England since the conquest.

These extracts may give us some idea of the consequences of hastily beginning any reformation of government.

being of a God was denied; every one's property was seized; every neighbour was invaded; a great nation was turned into an army of freebooters, and maintained on the plunder of the country; and whoever opposed their tyranny was put to instant death. Many thousands have been executed—more, it is conjectured, within these last two years, than had been put to death during the whole period of the existence of the French monarchy.* What will be the end of these things; or into what form of government they will settle at last, God only knows. At present, they are not only the scourge of Europe, but in a woeful state of tyranny and anarchy themselves.

The conversation ended here. Mitchel said he was perfectly satisfied. He thought Payne could have no good end in what he wrote. An attempt to bring men to an equality of station appeared plainly as impracticable, as it was mischievous. Peace and quietness, and contentedness in that station, in which God has placed us, unless there were more grievances

* This dialogue was written when the faction of Robespierre prevailed.

to complain of, than we have yet suffered, tended most, he thought, to the happiness of every man in particular, and of the society in general.

The doctor then called for a glass of ale, in which they drank the king's health! and John went home, quite happy with his situation, as a day-labourer.

ON

THE MORAL USES

THAT

MAY BE DRAWN FROM HUSBANDRY;

SHEWN IN A DIALOGUE,

BETWEEN

Doctor Lucas and Farmer Hardcastle.

On the Moral Uses that may be drawn from Husbandry, &c.

JOHN HARDCASTLE was an industrious farmer, which was the sum of his moral character. He was not quite of Saint Paul's opinion, that the law *was made only for the ungodly*. He thought the law of the land was direction enough for any man. He did not attend to those nice distinctions, which the consciences of some people are apt to make between law and right. He paid his debts, therefore, honestly, because the law obliged him to it; but he was not very scrupulous in making a bargain; because the law left that matter open; and though he was never convicted of forgery, it was supposed he made many a mistake in bills, where he thought he could not be traced. He was a great enemy to poverty; and used to say, the poor-laws were

the ruin of all industry. He considered his labourers—his cattle—and his land—all in the same light; merely to get what he could out of them. He disliked tithes, till he rented the doctor's, and then he thought them very good things. He went to church; but it was just as he went to market—to meet his neighbours, and settle the price of grain. His breast, indeed, was always like a country-fair--a continual throng, and buz of business.

Often did good doctor Lucas wish to talk a little seriously to him; but the farmer was never at leisure for serious conversation. It happened, however, one evening, when he came to pay his tithes, and to drink, as usual, a cup of ale, the doctor beguiled him into a religious topic. He happened to be in good spirits that day, having just heard that corn was on the rise.

The doctor began by paying the farmer a compliment, as he very well might, on the good condition of his land.—I ride, now and then, (said he,) about the country, and see what my neighbours are doing; and I do not think, Mr. Hardcastle, that I see any grounds in better order than I see your's.

Why, yes Sir, (said the farmer,) I take a

pretty deal of pains with my land, and it should bring me in something.

I think, (said the doctor,) you farm about three hundred acres. Some of your land, I have heard is exceedingly good: but I suppose it is not all of the same value.

Oh, dear Sir, no, (replied the farmer.) I have land worth twenty shillings an acre; and land not worth half-a-crown.

And is such poor land as that, (said the doctor,) worth cultivating?

Oh, dear Sir, no; (answered the farmer.) I have some land on the downs, that serves for little more, than to get my sheep a stomach for their victuals.

Such lands, (said the doctor,) is the farmer's misfortune: but, added he, smiling, I have been told Mr. Hardcastle, that you farmers sometimes make the land good for nothing yourselves by working out the heart of it;—especially at the end of a lease.

Why, to be sure, Sir, (replied the farmer,) people are apt to do so, when the land is likely to be no longer theirs. They are willing, while they keep it, to make as much of it, as they can.

But, I suppose, (resumed the doctor,) you would not manage an estate of your own in that way?

Why no, Sir, (said the farmer;) for, you know, what is a man's own, is worth all he can bestow upon it: and *land*, as my old father used to say, *is never ungrateful.*

I suppose, (said the doctor,) if it were your own, you would dress it, and dung it, and keep it clean from weeds, and burn the couch: and every now and then give it a summer's fallow.

That I should, certainly, (answered the farmer.)

Why now, my good friend, (replied the doctor,) you will perhaps be surprized, if I tell you, that I fear your practice is very different from all this.

I should indeed be surprized, (said the farmer.) I think I understand land pretty well; and I believe, in general, my crops are as good as my neighbour's.

I believe it, (said the doctor;) but I speak of another farm you have, which I fear you neglect as much as you improve this.

Indeed, Sir, (replied Hardcastle,) you are mistaken. I have no other farm, but this; and

whoever told you I had another farm, knows nothing of the matter. I should think it a great shame to have more land in my hands, than I could manage.

But does it make any difference, (said the doctor,) whether it be land, or any thing else, that you neglect, on a supposition that you ought equally to take care of it?

Why no, (answered the farmer,) I do not know that it does.—Do you mean, Sir, about Tom Osborne?

Why truly, (said the doctor,) as Tom Osborne broke his leg in your service, as he served you faithfully several years, and as he has nothing but his labour to live on, I did not think you did well in turning him adrift in his misfortune.—If others had not been more compassionate, the poor fellow might have starved.—However Tom Osborne was not in my head at present: I'll speak more plainly to you. I see you, every now and then, at church, where you must often hear of your soul, which you must allow to be a trust, as much committed to your care, as your farm.

O ho! doctor, (said the farmer) now I have you: but you come so comically round a man, that he knows not where to meet you.

Well, (replied the doctor,) but now you have met me, let me ask you a few questions about your management of this farm.

If you please, Sir, (said the farmer, pulling out his watch,) we will take another opportunity to talk of these matters. It grows late, and I have some orders to give the lads, before they go home.

Come, come, (replied the doctor,) sit down. I have not often an opportunity to talk with you. The lads will not go home till they have seen you. I wish only to convince you of the truth of some things from your own mouth; which, perhaps, you would not so readily be convinced of from mine.—I think you told me, Mr. Hardcastle, that there was a great difference in the value of your lands—that some were very valuable in comparison of others; and that you are at the most expense in cultivating those lands, that are the most valuable. I think, what you said, was something like this?

I believe it might, Sir, (said Hardcastle.)

Suppose then, (said the doctor,) that instead of better, and worse land, we make the comparison between your soul and your body. Is it not plain, that your soul, which is capable of re-

ceiving the joys of heaven, or of suffering the pains of hell, is more valuable, than your body, which is capable at best only of a small degree of satisfaction—and that obtained at the expense of great care, anxiety, and labour?—You are silent.—Is it not so, my good friend? You believe, you have a soul within you; and that this soul must certainly go either to heaven, or hell. Does it then require any thought to say, whether it is not more valuable than your body, which rots in the grave.

Why, yes, (said the farmer,) I think it must.

You *think it must*; (replied the doctor quickly,) cannot you pronounce it so at once, without *thinking* about it? Can you see, at once, that one acre of your land is better than another, and yet hesitate, whether your soul is more valuable than your body?

You come so quick upon one, Sir, (said the farmer,) that one has not time to say a word. I cannot be supposed to know so much of these things as you, whose business it is.

Business! my good friend, (said the doctor;) is the value of my soul more my business, than the value of your soul is your's? Are not both

our souls alike to go either to heaven, or to hell? Your's is certainly, therefore, as valuable to you, as mine is to me.

Why, yes, (said the farmer,) it seems so.

If then, (returned the doctor.) we are both agreed, that the soul is at least as much more valuable than the body, as your best land is more valuable than your worst—and if, as you said, you took the most pains in the cultivation of such land, as was the most valuable—it clearly follows, that you should, in the same way, be induced to take more pains with the cultivation of your soul than your body. You see, my good friend, I say nothing but just, in a manner, quote your own words.

Why, you scholars (said the farmer) can twist a man so as to make him say just what you please.

Nay, (replied the doctor,) I want only to make you speak according to your own best sense, and judgment. It is only for want of consideration, that you do not *think these things yourself*, without my urging them upon you; I only awaken your consideration. When a man is asleep, you know, he is the same sensible man, as when he is awake; only when he is asleep, he

cannot exercise his sense. I do no more, therefore, than just awaken you; the sense and judgment is your own. But let us proceed. You said farther, I think, that you valued and cultivated your lands, according to the length of the leases, by which you held them—that such as you held on a lease just expiring, you were very much tempted to neglect—but that you laid out all your strength on such lands as were your own; or which you held for a long term; but, now, if you consider the matter properly, you will find, you have here just pointed out the case between your body and your soul.

Indeed, Sir, (said the farmer,) you make me say many things I never thought of. If I did *point out the case*, as you say, it was without any intention; for I was thinking of nothing but my lands.

That may be, (said the doctor;) but it is not for that reason less a truth.—You have only a very short lease, you know, of your body; or, as you should rather consider it, you have no lease at all.—You may be turned out, for any thing you know, to-morrow. Whereas, you have a very long lease of your soul;—or rather it may be called an estate for ever. Now, if you are

consistent with yourself, Mr. Hardcastle, you should cultivate this estate in proportion to its duration.

You mean, I suppose, Sir, (said Mr. Hardcastle,) that I should consider soul-matters, as I do those of my land; but you must consider, Sir, that I have been bread up to the one; and have not, as you have, been bred up to the other.

I thought, (said the doctor,) we had already settled it, that *soul-matters,* as you call them, were as much your concern as mine? therefore, that we should be equally *bred up to them.* Depend upon it, you will find it so in the end, when you settle your last, and great accounts. Besides, you will find a difference in the manner of settling accounts between *soul-matters,* and land-matters. Sir William only says, pay me my rent. But your soul-landlord will say, how have you improved your tenement? I should wish you, therefore, my good neighbour, to consider these things; and as your soul is so valuable a tenement, and held also by so long a lease, to set about the improvement of it in good earnest.

Why, Sir, what can a man do, (said the

farmer,) who has so much business on his hands, as I have? If I had twelve more hours in the day, I think I could employ them all: and if a man be industrious, and mind his business, I see not what else he can mind. Neither Sir William, nor you would take it well, if I should be behind hand in my payments; and I hope God Almighty does not require more from a man, than he can do.

Certainly not, (replied the doctor.) But you will recollect, Mr. Hardcastle, that the gospel was *intended* for the use of all mankind—for the poor, as well as the rich—for the man of business, as well as the man of leisure. So that you may be assured, as it was *intended* for the use of all mankind, it is *fitted* for the use of all mankind.—Pray, what part of your duty does business prevent? You can praise God. You can love him, and trust in him, without any hindrance of business. You can be kind, and charitable to your neighbour, without any hindrance of business; you can be humble likewise, contented, and sober, without any hindrance of business. In short, religion does not so much require your hands, as your heart. It hinders no business, because it may be practised in the midst of business.—What do you

think of farmer Exton? I fancy nobody's grounds are better cropped—nobody's barns better filled—nor any body's cattle, and sheep, better sold; and yet, I believe, farmer Exton is as good a christian as any in the parish. His business, and his religion, go hand in hand together.

Aye, (said Hardcastle,) they may for any thing I know; but it is not always whining, and canting, that makes a good christian.

That's very true, Mr. Hardcastle, (said the doctor, who was piqued at hearing so inviduous an expression, and resolved to make the farmer feel it.) But as I think you have not a just notion of our worthy neighbour, I shall point out some parts of his character, which will shew you, that his christianity does not consist entirely in *whining and canting*. I do not pretend to enter into his heart, and judge of the sincerity of his religion. I shall only speak of his actions, which are open to every body, and which are the best interpreters of his heart. In the first place, as to his dealings with his chapmen, and neighbours, nobody ever, I believe, laid the least imputation upon him: his word was his law;—his sack never differed from his sample.

Here, Hardcastle began to look conscious, and to bite his lips.

Nor did he ever, (continued the doctor,) play any jockey-tricks with a broken-winded horse, to make him appear sound for two or three hours, till he could get him disposed of for five-times his worth.

As for that, (said Hardcastle,) I think, Sir, at a fair——

Do you mean, (answered the doctor, turning quickly upon him,) that a man is at more liberty to cheat at a fair, than at his own house? But do not interrupt me, Mr. Hardcastle; it looks as if you were conscious of yourself. I have not mentioned you; I am only defending our honest neighbour—and shewing you there is something more in him, than *whining and canting*. You have often, I dare say, been in his house; Did you ever see a more cheerful and happy man in his family? Did you ever hear him complain of the wetness of a season; or the dryness of a season; or the badness of crop? Never, I dare say. He is very industrious, and does the best he can, himself; the rest he leaves to Providence. It is the misfortune of many people, Mr. Hardcastle, that they do not distinguish

between industry and carking; the one is a virtue—the other is a distrust of Providence. Then, again, among his servants and labourers, my neighbour Exton is quite a father; and if any one is sick, he is as well laid up as if he were a child of the family.

Why now, Sir, (said Hardcastle,) who was so natural to take care of Tom Osborne, as his own father and mother?

I did not mention Tom Osborne, (said the doctor;) but if I must speak my mind, I think you were more natural. His poor father is only a day-labourer, and has four young children; and his wife is at this time suckling an infant. However, we have nothing to do with Tom Osborne at present; I was endeavouring only to set you right about our worthy neighbour's character. I was mentioning his kindness to his servants. It is pleasant to see him and them together at the hay-field, or harvest, or any other business; so far is he from swearing and blustering among them, you never hear the least harsh or angry word: all is gentle and mild, on one hand, and every person solicitous to please, and do his duty on the other. I believe Mr. Exton has not a servant or labourer about his house, who is not

as studious of his master's interest as if it were his own.

I can tell you, (said Hardcastle,) that if he had such folks as mine about him, he would find it otherwise. Mine, are such a pack of provoking rascals, they will often do the very thing I forbid; and have not half the care about them that my sheep-dog has. It was but last night, that the pigs were forgotten; and if I had not heard the poor creatures whining, they would have had no supper. Aye, aye; Exton may think himself very lucky in having a set of good servants; if he had mine, I can tell him, they would work his gizzard for him.

Now I rather think, (replied the doctor,) he would make them as good as his own. I am afraid, Mr. Hardcastle, you are too rough with your servants, and give them harsh, and abusive language, which will never go down. Besides, if you have no confidence in them, but are suspicious of every thing they do, it makes them artful and tricking; they set their wit against your's—and there is a sort of contest between you, which shall out-wit the other. Then, again, I must mention another thing, which has a great effect on servants: farmer Exton is a

regular, quiet man; he has no carousings at home; nor ever spends a late hour, drinking and swaggering at the public house, after the market is over, as many farmers do. Nothing contributes more to make servants irregular, than such an example in a master. I could say much more in praise of farmer Exton; but I have said enough to shew you, that there is something more in him than *whining and canting*. I think also he may shew you, that a farmer may even have more business than you have, (for, I believe, Mr. Exton's farm is considerably larger than your's,) and yet be a good christian at the same time. Indeed, I think you farmers have more opportunities than any other people, to turn your thoughts to religious subjects.

I do not see that, (said Hardcastle;) I think few people have busier lives.

That may be, (returned the doctor;) but all your business is such an emblem of religious duty, that one should suppose every man, who had read the scriptures, must see it.

I do not quite understand you, sir, (said Hardcastle:) but, if you please, I'll call upon you some other day to hear you talk these matters over, when I have more time.

I shall not keep you long, Mr. Hardcastle, (answered the doctor.) Indeed you have in part already answered your own difficulty. Do you remember what you said to me about ploughing —sowing—harrowing—fallowing, and cleansing your land? Only apply this to your heart, and you will make yourself as good a christian as you are a farmer. I am still desiring you to instruct yourself.—It is as necessary to plough, and harrow your heart, as your land. Turn it over, and over. Cleanse it from weeds. Suffer nothing to grow in it that is vicious. Every field has its particular weeds; and to these you are chiefly attentive. In one the couch prevails; in another the thistle. Treat your heart in the same manner—be attentive to all your bad habits; and to those particularly, which are apt to gain most ground upon you. Give yourself also, as you do your land, its proper fallow. Spend your Sundays in a pious, religious manner. Encourage in yourself every virtue. Be pious to God; and resigned to his Providence in all circumstances. No men are so immediately under the government of heaven, as you farmers; none have those constant opportunities which you have, of living under a religious dependence.

The artisan depends more on his own industry —the farmer immediately on God's providence, who orders the seasons; and gives, or withholds, his rain and sunshine. Trust, therefore, in God; and be kind to your neighbour. As God is bountiful to you in increasing your stores, pay him your tribute of praise, by imparting kindly to those in need.—Lastly, as you keep your fences in repair to prevent straying, and trespassing cattle, from entering your grounds, I should advise you to use the same caution in matters of religion. Your mind wants its fences kept in repair, as well as your grounds, lest bad thoughts, and the cares of the world should enter, and eat up all that is good.—This kind of religious husbandry, my good friend, will stand you instead, at the great harvest-home, when all mankind shall be gathered into the garners of God—when the wheat shall be laid up in store; and in the awful words of Scripture, the *chaff shall be burnt with unquenchable fire.*

Here the good doctor ended his discourse; and then taking the farmer by the hand, and looking him full in the face, with a kind, benevolent countenance, said, God Almighty bless you, my good friend; I pray God you may

lay these things to heart, and may you be as happy in this world, and the next, as I wish you to be.

The farmer's heart was seldom apt to be softened by any thing he heard or saw; but the solemnity, the earnestness, and the kindness of the doctor's manner, together with the close application which had been made to him from his own profession, overpowered him; his lips quivered, and he could get nothing out, but good night to you, sir; good night to you. The doctor, thinking he saw something of the signs of penitence in him, pressed his hand kindly, and calling him back, as he went out, desired him to give two books, (a Testament and a prayer-book, which he put into his hands,) to his daughter Sally, as Mr. Simpson, (added the doctor,) told me how much pleased he was the other day, with hearing her read.

The doctor had the satisfaction to find afterwards, that his conversation with the farmer had had a better effect upon him, than he feared it would have had. Every one began to take notice, that farmer Hardcastle grew more serious than he used to be—that he was more mild, and gentle—that he was never heard to

swear—that he came home early, and always sober, every market day. And the doctor heard, with great pleasure, that he had sent three guineas to Tom Osborne's father; and desired, that, as soon as the young man could walk, he would come to the farm, where he should receive his wages in full for what little he could do. The farmer would often, also, when he met the doctor in his walks, take an opportunity of asking him some questions about the sacrament, or other religious subjects. He began also to have several scruples, which he would bring to the doctor, whom he now looked upon as his best friend. The doctor always received him cheerfully—resolved his scruples—gave him the best advice, and encouraged all his good resolutions by his kind and friendly behaviour.—Mr. Hardcastle became very desirous also of Mr. Exton's company, who was always ready to receive him. With that worthy man he thought himself always safe; and, for a long time, used to go to market, and return with him. He often, also, spent his evening at the farmer's house, and soon found more pleasure in his company, than in the company of his old companions, whom he now totally

deserted.—He looked also into Mr. Exton's little library, and purchased several books on his recommendation, and began to take a pleasure in reading them.—In short, in less than a twelvemonth, he was so altered, that no one could have known him for the same person; and his family, of course, became as orderly as himself. He was yet only a middle-aged man, and lived many years afterwards in great credit with his neighbours; and, with regard to himself, was never so happy before. Instead of that face of care and perplexity, which he had hitherto always worn, he became cheerful and pleasant. He now found, that, as he could not make either the sun to shine, or the rain to fall, as he wished, it was better to leave them both in the hands of Providence; and he used often to say, that now, when he hoped he had made God his friend, and trusted in him, he not only found himself much happier than he was before, but he observed, also, that all his business went on better.

ON

INDISCRIMINATE ALMS-GIVING;

A DIALOGUE.

On Indiscriminate Alms-giving.

Dr. Lucas, and Mr. Hales, were both very charitable men. They both considered themselves as trustees, for what the bounty of heaven had given them; and, to the best of their judgment, discharged their respective trusts; but they discharged it in different ways. The doctor only gave where he knew his money would be of service. Mr. Hales, who was a feeling, compassionate man, gave indiscriminately, wherever there was the appearance of distress.

The doctor happening to call upon him one day, just as he had been distributing his alms among a number of common beggars, said he had often wished to talk to him a little on that subject: for indeed, my dear Sir, (said he) I

have frequently heard you complained of, for encouraging all these loose idle people to stroll about the country.

Poor souls! (said Mr. Hales.) I know not what harm they do to any body; they take their pittance quietly; and go away contented.

They are not, my dear Sir, (replied the doctor,) quite so harmless as you suppose them; begging, considered as a *trade*, is bad enough; but if you think these itinerants are content with their trade, I fancy you are mistaken. I should doubt, whether their gains do not arise from pilfering also. When we see them travelling about the country, with their panniered asses, or sitting at their meals under hedges, we cannot but suppose the fire burns—the pot boils—and the ass feeds at the expense of a pillaged neighbourhood—not, perhaps, of the neighbourhood where they then are, (for I believe they seldom *pilfer* and *regale* at the same place) but at the expense of some neighbouring district. They know well enough, where plunder is to be had; and can load an ass very expeditiously, and decamp. These things may not, perhaps, hurt you; but the poor cottager, who has only his little plot of turnips, or potatoes, or ill-fenced cabbages, often feels the

mischief. And you assist in bringing this mischief upon him. Besides, idleness and sloth, and a vagabond life, are very infectious; and the contagion, I doubt not, catches many a poor saunterer, who finds labour disagreeable.

I think, my dear Sir, (said Mr. Hales,) you are too severe upon these poor, unbefriended outcasts of society. Charity, we are told, *believeth all things*; and this surely implies, that we must run the risk often of being deceived; and that it is an act of religion to guard the avenues of our hearts against such hardness, as they may now and then contract, from a little imposition.

To guard against hardness of heart, (replied the doctor,) is certainly a great christian duty. And if you *cannot* guard against it without suffering yourself to be imposed on, I know not what to say. You must suffer the evil, so far as I can see, for the sake of the good.—But I truly hope, my dear Sir, you may guard against hardness of heart on easier terms.—You say I am too severe: if I am too severe on one side, I think you swing the pendulum as much too far on the other. *Charity believeth all things*, it is true: but I presume the text means only

such things, as can be *reasonably believed.* But your's, my dear Sir, is a kind of charity which believeth all things on one side, but nothing on the other.—How are these people, pray, the outcasts of society? Only by making themselves so, as many other worthless people do, by rejecting all its restraints, and common offices, and setting up a society of their own.—I mentioned them as *mischievous in a neighbourhood*: but they may be branded as *pests to the society at large.** Nobody, I suppose, doubts that there

* To shew the mischief of any evil, it should be traced up to its greatest malignity; as it always has a tendency to it. In Count Rumford's *Experimental Essays on establishing the poor in Munich,* (see vol. 1, p. 14.) we have the following extracts; and in any country, where common beggars are not checked by the magistrates, or discouraged by the people at large, the same evil, in a greater or a less degree, may be apprehended.

" The number of itinerant beggars, who strolled about " the country, levying contributions from the industrious " inhabitants, stealing, and robbing, and leading a life of " indolence, and the most shameless debauchery, was incre- " dible. So numerous were their swarms in all the great " towns, and particularly in the capital; so great was their " impudence, and so persevering their importunity, that it " was almost impossible to cross the streets without being " attacked, and absolutely forced to satisfy their clamorous

are clans and bodies of these people, settled in different parts, under regulations of their own;

" demands. And these beggars were, in general, by no
" means such as from age or bodily infirmities, were unable
" by their labour to earn their livelihood; but were, for
" the most part, stout, strong, healthy, sturdy people; who,
" lost to every sense of shame, had embraced the profession
" from choice, not necessity; and who not unfrequently
" added insolence, and threats, to their importunity; and
" extorted that from fear, which they could not procure
" by their arts of dissimulation. These beggars not only
" infested all the streets, and public places, but would
" enter houses, and never failed to steal whatever fell in
" their way, if they found nobody at home; and the
" churches were so full of them, that people at their devotions
" were frequently obliged to satisfy their demands, in
" order to finish their prayers in peace and quiet. They had
" recourse also to the most diabolical arts, and horrid crimes
" in the prosecution of their infamous trade. Young children
" were stolen from their parents—their eyes were put out,
" or their limbs distorted, in order, by exposing them thus
" maimed, to excite the commiseration of the public.
" They would expose children also naked, and almost
" starved in the streets, that by their cries, and unaffected
" expressions of distress, they might move those who passed
" by to relieve them; and in order to make them act their
" part more naturally, they were unmercifully beaten, when
" they came home, if they did not bring a certain sum,
" which they were ordered to collect. In the mean time,
" others joined the society of these beggars, allured by

and that the heads of these societies send out proper persons to collect alms, and pilfer about

" their indolent lives—encouraged by their succesful frauds " —and emboldened by their impunity. These professional " beggars formed a distinct class, or cast: there was a kind " of political connection among them; and certain general " maxims were adopted, and regulations observed."

These abandoned clans, the Count tells us, were, by proper treatment, reduced into order: but till some such method is taken in every country, where beggary prevails, indiscriminate alms-giving should be discouraged; " as nothing, " the Count is of opinion, tends more powerfully to *encourage* " idleness, and immorality among the poor; and to *perpetu-* " *ate* all the evils to society, which arise from the preva- " lence of poverty and mendicity." See Essay II. chap. v.

From Mr. Townsend's travels through Spain, the following extracts are taken.

" Notwithstanding all that has been done, in the way of " charity, beggars clothed in rags, and covered with vermin, " swarm in every street. Is it not evident, therefore, that " they have done too much, increasing both the numbers, " and the distresses of the poor, by the very means which " have been employed to relieve them?—Dry up the foun- " tain, and although at first the distress will be increased, " and the population diminished, yet as the fruit of that " industry, which can only spring from distress, population " will afterwards advance in regular progression—wealth " will be diffused; and distress confined to the cottage of " the slothful." Vol. II. p. 8.

" I was struck, at Cordova, with the multitude of beggars

the country—and that these emissaries are well instructed in all the arts of forging

" in every street; and, on enquiry, found the cause to be the " mistaken benevolence of the bishop, canons, and convents, " in distributing alms to all who ask." Vol. II. p. 301.

" With such encouragement for beggars, no wonder they " should abound in Malaga, where the profligate know, for " a certainty, that they can never be in want of bread.— " Filth, and nastiness—immorality, and vice—wretched- " ness, and poverty—the inevitable consequences of undis- " tinguished benevolence, prevail. How evident is it, from " hence, that he who indiscriminately feeds the poor, " should be ranked among their enemies." Vol. III. p. 17.

" Don Francisco Pacheca, on his appointment to the " government of Alicant, found the city swarming with " beggars. He saw, in a proper light both the cause, and the " consequences of this abundance of unprofitable subjects, " and determined to stop it. But he knew that prejudice " would run strong against him. For this reason he enga- " ged the most popular preachers, during Lent, to expatiate " on the merit of giving to the poor; and afterwards to " explain the propriety of making a distinction in the " distribution of their alms, so as not to offer a premium " to laziness, prodigality, and vice." Vol. III. p. 183.

" The city of Valencia swarms with sturdy beggars. I " suspected, what I found to be the case, that the ecclesi- " astics distribute money, bread, and broth to all who make " application. This circumstance sufficiently accounts for " the multitude of miserable objects, who in Valencia, as in " all other places, bear exact proportion to the undistin- " guishing benevolence of wealth." Vol. III. p. 252.

pitious stories—impressing them with moving gesticulations; and, where necessary, with religious cant. In this vile way they live, in defiance of all the regulations of society; and of those bonds which keep mankind in decent union. They have no sacred rites among them, that ever I heard of—no baptism—no marriage—no divine service. In short, they lead lives worse than heathens, though in the midst of a Christian country. In the mean time, as they contribute nothing by their labour to the public good, the whole maintenance of these useless tribes, is taken of course out of the mouths of those, who deserve it better.—You see, I do not amuse you with stories of this, or that imposition, though I dare venture to say, that if the melancholy stories you hear, were all followed up, you would find nine in ten of them to be impositions; but I lay my charge against them on a broad foundation, which I believe nobody, who knows any thing of the matter, will be inclined to deny.

I am afraid, (said Mr. Hales,) there is too much truth in this charge. But still, my dear Sir, we should not harden our hearts against them for their wickedness. It is not in this way

that our heavenly father treats us. He giveth his rain on the evil, and on the good; and his sunshine on the just, and on the unjust. And as we are ordered to be perfect, as our father is perfect—that is, to copy after his perfections as nearly as we can,—we should not confine our benevolence within the narrow notions of assisting only the deserving; but should spread our bounty, universally, on all that need it.

When you see a spendthrift, then, (said the doctor) neglecting his family, and carrying all he can get to the ale-house, I suppose you still pour your bounty upon him with a liberal hand.

No, certainly; (answered Mr. Hales) because I know it will only furnish him with the means of being more profligate.

But why should you urge that as a reason? (said the doctor.) On your principles it should be none. Does not God Almighty know, as well as you, that the unjust man, on whom he shed his rain, and his sunshine, will mispend his bounty? Yet he sheds them notwithstanding. If then we are to follow implicity that exalted example, we should give to the prodigal as readily as to any other man.

Mr. Hales hesitating in giving an answer; you see then, (continued the doctor) that as you make one exception, you may allow me to make another. We know nothing of the ways of Providence. God's mode of treating us, we see plainly, cannot be an exact rule for our treatment of our fellow creatures. He has many wise reasons, which we cannot fathom. He has given us general rules, and reason; and conscience must direct us in the use of them; and shew us how we ought, and how we cannot imitate. We are told, for instance, that God is *no respecter of persons.* Yet, if we follow this rule too literally, there will be an end of all society; and a breach of the scripture precept, which orders us to *pay honour, to whom honour is due.*

But is it not hard (said Mr. Hales) to consider all the indigent people, who solicit our charity, among these abandoned pests of society? Some, no doubt, are reduced to penury by unavoidable misfortunes, and are surely the objects of compassion. And a degree of pity is certainly due to those, who have been bred up from their infancy in this way of life, and have no means of relinquishing it.

Aye, surely; (said the doctor) these are the only hard cases, which belong to the question. There are, no doubt, many people, even in the class of common beggars, (for of such only we are speaking) whom we should wish to assist. But, in the first place, you must consider, that it is the trade of begging, which generally brings these poor people to distress. If this trade ceased, the distresses occasioned by it would cease with it; and, in the second place, begging is so odious, so mischievous, and so disgraceful in a country, that if it could be abolished, though at the expense of some degree of hardship in a few particular cases, I should think it eligible. It is no more than must necessarily happen in every salutary provision. Particular cases must always give way to general advantages. You inclose a common. It is hard on many poor cottagers, who are deprived of the little pasturage it afforded for a cow, or a pig. But an extended cultivation is so general a good, that it preponderates over all partial inconveniences. You lay taxes, which often fall heavily in particular cases: but if the tax be good on the whole, the partial inconvenience must be overlooked. Besides, my dear Sir, you, whose maxim it is to

imitate in all things, as far as you can, our Heavenly Father, cannot certainly, with propriety, reject this doctrine. Thunder and lightening, storms, earthquakes, and inundations, fall often very severely on particular persons. But the Almighty Ruler permits them notwithstanding, as the means, no doubt, of general good. However, with regard to those who have lived long in the habit of begging, I should hope the mischief you apprehend from withdrawing your bounty would not be so great as you fear. When they found themselves neglected, some of them, perhaps, would go to useful labour. Others, who disabled, having served their community long, as choice instruments, finding now their abilities useless, might retire to their parishes: most of them, I should suppose, might have this resource; while the most abandoned, who will listen to no calls of conscience, or example, must be left to the hand of justice, and weeded away like other noxious things. In a country like this, where such ample provision is made for the poor, the real objects which a total abolition of begging would leave behind, I should hope would be very few indeed.

But these things (said Mr. Hales) belong to

parish-officers, and magistrates. If the former are hard, and the latter remiss, I see not why *we* may not make up their deficiencies. If the evil be not, or cannot be, *removed*, it remains for us, on the principles of charity, to *mitigate* it. God no where appoints us, private people, to the office of punishing vice; but to the more amiable one of relieving misery.

You are not, (said the doctor) desired to *punish* vice, but only not to *encourage* it. And the most pleasing part of charity is still left to you, which is, to give where your gift will not only be the most acceptable, but the most useful.—The *friend of the poor* is an amiable title; the *friend of the beggar*, I fear, but an ambiguous one. But pray, my dear sir, what reason have you to believe the parish-officer is in general hard.—There may be hard cases from misapprehension, and other causes; but as far as I am acquainted with parish-officers, I have generally found them ready to comply with the necessities of the poor. Ours, I am sure are. Indeed, what interest have they to be otherwise? If they were to relieve the poor out of their own pockets, a powerful interest might draw the other way. But as they supply the poor out of a parish-fund,

they can be influenced by no motives, as far as I can see, but those of acting a just part between the parish and the poor. And even suppose they should, as I am ready to suppose they sometimes may, be too saving of the parish-fund, a very easy appeal lies to the justice of the peace; who surely cannot be thought to be under undue influence; and he orders, *upon the spot*, what relief he thinks proper. So that, between one and the other, I hope there is little ground to fear the poor are, in *general*, harshly treated. You are a compassionate man; and may, perhaps, often think more should be done, than really can be done. But the parish officer, I believe, is commonly a better judge in these cases, than you can be.—Then, again, as to the magistrate, I see not *how* he can prevent the evil of vagrant beggary, unless he be supported by the people at large. It is just the case of smuggling.—However active the law may be, yet still, if people allow themselves to purchase smuggled goods, the trade of smuggling will, in some shape, always thrive. Leave off purchasing smuggled goods, and the evil ceases of course. Thus your vagrant beggar, if he can only move the compassion of the *people*, is cunning enough

to avoid the *magistrate*. But take from him the countenance of the public, and he will stroll no longer.

I cannot think, (replied Mr. Hales,) that the little he gets in charity can be a sufficient encouragement to him. I should not suppose, that people in general are very liberal to these unhappy vagrants.

Perhaps not, (said the doctor;) but this still strengthens the argument against them. They make up the rest in pillage. They *must* live either on *alms* or *pillage*. They have no other means. Their living on pillage certainly shews the mischief of these people, in a still stronger light.

It may, (said Mr. Hales;) but at the same time, it takes from the edge of the argument against indiscriminate alms-giving. If such alms-giving is not general, and liberal enough to answer the end of discouragement, why should we few, who do give, be denied the pleasure of thinking that, by our little, we at least relieve some distress?

Your argument, (replied the doctor,) is a little sophistical. Just so, though in a worse cause, you have heard a good neighbour of ours

argue about smuggled goods. If people will not abstain from smuggling, so as to break the practice, why may not I, now and then, buy a little chinz or India silk?—We have nothing to do with the practice of other people. The only question should be, is the general practice right or wrong? By not relieving these strollers, you would certainly, as far as your influence extends, remove the pretence which these people have for leading vagrant lives. Your house and a few others are the very landmarks, which direct them into the country.—But indeed, my dear Sir, (continued the doctor,) these unhappy people are not more the enemies of a *neighbourhood*, and of the *community* in general, as we have just been considering them, than they are enemies to *themselves*. They are certainly a miserable, unhappy people. Begging precludes all exertion. Industry, which gives a sort of consequence to the mind, is unknown to them. They have a wild kind of merriment among them, which is the offspring of vice: but there can be no real comfort, without some proper employment of mind or body. The man of letters seeks it in his books: the peasant finds it in his labour. Honest industry is a state of great comfort—

perhaps of the greatest. But what, think you, must be the condition of those, who have employment neither for body nor mind? What can you expect, but wickedness of every kind in societies, if they may be called such, where there is no check either of law or religion to restrain them—where wicked nature is left to itself—where appetites and passions are wholly unbridled, and promiscuously indulged, where not even a public eye is upon them, to keep them within the bounds of decency?—The apostle says, *he that will not work, let him not eat.* How far we are to explain such an expression literally, I will not say; but I will at least put this interpretation upon it, *him who will not work, I will not feed.*—This reminds me of a pleasant story I heard of an old gentleman, who took a very effectual method of getting rid of vagrants. When they told him, as they commonly did, they begged only because they could not get work that suited them, he would set them to weed in his court or garden, which he was sure was not above their strength; promising to each a shilling, when they had completed the work he set them. He would then take his morning walk; and while he continued in sight, his

labourers would work with great diligence. But no sooner was his back turned, than he never found one who did not run off leaving his work, though perhaps half finished, and his shilling behind him. Thus, the old gentleman would merrily say, he had his courts weeded for nothing, and was never pestered twice with the same itinerant.*

I like your story very well, (said Mr. Hales,) I believe indeed the common beggar is often idle, lazy, and bad enough.—But still how would you direct your charity? Would you give only to those whose characters you approve?

I should certainly, if I could, (replied the doctor,) wish to encourage virtue and religion by means of my charity, as by every other means. But if I confine my charity merely to such objects, I am afraid I must confine it within very narrow bounds; for, in general, it is vice, in some shape or other, which brings people into distress. Here then I endeavour humbly to imitate that benign Being, who *sends his rain upon the evil and upon the good.* I give to many, no doubt, whom I think very undeserving. But, at

* This story, or one very like it, (for I write from memory,) may be found in Mr. Grose's oleo.

the same time, I take care of one thing, against which indiscriminate alms-giving cannot provide—I give only where I am persuaded my money will be of use. If I assist in cloathing the children of a drunken father, I think I do some good; for though perhaps, in some measure, I encourage him to spend more at the alehouse; yet I have the comfort to think the poor children are warmly cloathed. Such misapplications of charity we can never wholly prevent. In the meantime, I am enabled often to mix a little advice, or reproof, or exhortation with my alms; and can see what effect it produces. Whereas nothing of this kind can be done, with any hope of success, among common beggars.

But we are often, (said Mr Hales,) required in Scripture to be charitable to the stranger, that is, to the person of whom we know nothing. The wounded Jew was a stranger to the good Samaritan.

Persons certainly, (said the doctor,) in such circumstances as the wounded Jew, are always objects of our charity. Where *immediate assistance* is necessary, no hesitation should take place. Tricks, no doubt, founded on various maladies, are often put upon the inadvertent; and when

discovered should be punished: yet still where there is the appearance of malady, and immediate want of relief, we should not be swayed by the fear of an imposition.—But this is not the case, in general, of common beggars. As to strangers, merely as such, the difference between *our* country and *Judea* certainly points out a difference in our treatment of them. In Judea, where there were no inns, the traveller was indebted to the hospitality of such as would take him in. But hospitality is a virtue which hardly has existence in such a country as this. You may call *vagrants*, *travellers*, if you please; but they are such travellers as I think entitled to no rites of hospitality.

Your goodness and charitable disposition, (said Mr. Hales,) are too well known, my dear Sir, to admit any sinister interpretation. Your actions, no doubt, are all upon principle. But I must own I am sometimes apt to think, that many people turn a deaf ear to the melancholy complaints of these wretched itinerants—that they may have an excuse for not giving—or that they may avoid the trouble of examining complaints—or through the fear perhaps of meeting some miserable object, that may give them distress.

I know not, my dear Sir, (said the doctor,) whether such suppositions are quite charitable. It may be so, or it may not be. We have nothing to do with motives. They belong solely to God: and perhaps our Saviour's severe prohibition of judging, may respect the judging of motives more than any thing else. In judging a bad action, which can proceed from no good motive, we are not so easily misled. And yet actions, which often appear very bad, may be qualified by motives. But with mere motives, we have little to do. The heart is a deep abyss. You remember the rule you just quoted, that *charity believeth all things*.—You would not perhaps, my dear Sir, think it charitable, if any one should ascribe your relieving so many beggars at your gate to parade and ostentation. —Let each of us then endeavour to do his best; and make his own motives as pure as he can, and leave the motives of others to God.

Mr. Hales begged pardon, and acknowledged he was wrong; and the more so, as he owned he thought there was much force in what the doctor had said, against relieving vagrants.

Let us then now, (said the doctor,) bring our desultory discourse to a conclusion. The issue of the point seems to depend chiefly on

this question, whether these tribes of itinerant beggars are a *public evil?* If they are, (as I think it plainly appears, from their being a nuisance to a *neighbourhood*—an evil in *society*—and a source of great unhappiness to *themselves*) it follows, that the encouragement of them is neither more nor less than taking an active part in continuing, and increasing a very great mischief. A few cases, and but a few, we have seen, are exceptions. A few cases also of hardship may remain; though perhaps fewer than may be supposed. But still no inconvenience should deter us from what, on rational grounds, we conceive to be a duty; and such it certainly is to endeavour to rid the country of such a pest.—Besides, (added the doctor,) by pursuing this mode of charity, we fly in the face of the constitution that protects us. The laws, conceiving vagrant beggary a disgrace to a police, have not only strictly forbidden it, but have also humanely provided a remedy for the necessitous: and if private people think themselves authorised to break the laws of the land in one instance, they may in another; and so dissolve, by degrees, all the orders of society.

Mr. Hales seemed struck with all this reasoning; and especially with the last clause of it.—The discourse afterwards turned on other subjects; but still this was uppermost in his thoughts.—For some days the doctor's arguments kept wavering in his mind. He was very desirous of finding them inconclusive: but, notwithstanding all the pleadings of his compassionate heart, his reason was at length overpowered, and he acquiesced fully in the sentiments of his friend.

One morning, therefore, calling his servants together, he told them, he had been considering the matter of giving alms to common beggars. I am well informed, said he, they are a great nuisance in the country; and am resolved, therefore, to encourage them no longer. It is not, he added, because I think those of my own parish the only proper objects of my charity. I should just as readily give to any other, though I know nothing of them, who are properly recommended to me. And when any of you shall hear of a real object of distress, I should be glad to have it mentioned to me; but common beggars I will relieve no longer.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 32	Line 14	*for* yet his, *read* that his.
92	12	*for* Virgiliance, *read* Virgilianæ.
231	11	*for* Ratiarius, *read* Retiarius.
237	5	*for* 'What all know, *read* What know all.

G. SIDNEY, Printer,
Northumberland Street, Strand.

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Gilpin, William
Dialogues on various subjects

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